

# Decolonising Art and Media in Madrid and Sydney

*The Articulation of political Identities in the  
(in)formal Resistance*

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This thesis is presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy,  
August 2016

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## *ABSTRACT*

This thesis is based on fieldwork conducted in two different urban contexts. I explore the cultural and media practices of Latin American people in Madrid, Spain and Aboriginal people in Sydney, Australia. I argue that both case studies constitute attempts to decolonise the dominant and homogeneous representations of these peoples within mediated industries. Utilising a range of research methods that include multi-located ethnography, participant observation, interviews and analysis of the creative works of two radio and theatre groups in each location, I evoke different social worlds where political identities of resistance are articulated. Attention to daily practices reveals both groups' difficulties in accessing commodified media markets, in part because of their physical characteristics. Further, I show how these groups find their own ways to expose their subjectivities and disseminate their creative works, voices and responses, including dialogues with institutions and funding bodies. The analysis of these groups presents different results yet overall shows commonalities in how these collectives use similar tools to counteract the residues of colonialism in the present. Throughout this thesis, colonialism appears as an unfinished power relation between dominant groups and minority groups in Spanish and Australian societies.

## *RESUMEN*

Esta tesis se basa en el trabajo de campo realizado en dos contextos urbanos distintos. Exploro las prácticas culturales y mediáticas de latinoamericanos en Madrid, España y aborígenes en Sídney, Australia. Argumento que estos casos de estudio constituyen intentos por parte de estos dos grupos por descolonizar representaciones dominantes y homogéneas en las industrias mediáticas. Utilizando una metodología variada que incluye etnografía multi-local, observación participante, entrevistas y el análisis de los trabajos creativos de los dos grupos de radio y teatro en cada localidad, señalo los distintos mundos sociales donde los sujetos de estudio articulan identidades políticas de resistencia. Prestando atención a sus prácticas diarias se revelan las dificultades de los dos grupos para acceder a los mercados mediáticos, en parte debido a sus características físicas. Además, muestro cómo estos grupos encuentran sus propias maneras de exponer sus subjetividades y difundir sus trabajos creativos, voces y respuestas, incluyendo diálogos con instituciones y organismos que conceden ayudas económicas. El análisis de estos grupos presenta distintos resultados pero sobre todo muestra comunales en cómo estos colectivos usan similares herramientas para contrarrestar los residuos del colonialismo en el presente. A lo largo de la tesis el colonialismo aparece como una relación de poder inacabada entre grupos dominantes y grupos minoritarios en las sociedades española y australiana.

## *Acknowledgments*

I feel very fortunate for having met the people who have formed part of this investigation: the members of Entrecalles, Las Radiantes, Koori Radio and Moogahlin Performing Arts; as well as their colleagues, relatives and friends. It is hard to find the words to express my acknowledgement to you for having shared your time with me, for letting me to form part of your projects, for so many good conversations and for participating in this investigation, also by lending me your resources when I needed them and teaching me to use radio and other devices. Yet specially, thanks for the moments of happiness in which I almost forgot that I was doing research.

Thanks to my supervisors; at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Álvaro Pazos and Liliana Suárez; at Macquarie University, Eve Vincent and Kalpana Ram. This investigation has been done under a cotutelle agreement between the UAM and MQ. At MQ I thank Jason Ray for his work and endeavour to get the agreement. Thanks also to Daniel Fisher for his support. At UAM I thank to Paloma Gómez Crespo for her help to get the agreement. During the time I did the fieldwork in Madrid I enjoyed a Collaboration Grant at the Escuela Politécnica Superior at UAM, supervised by Pablo Varona. I thank him, the administrators, cleaners, ITs and the professorate of the EPS for their support and affection which facilitated my stay in Madrid and the research. Many thanks also for your help in the hard moments and your great companionship atmosphere.

I have had the great chance to form part of diverse anthropology departments, which has permitted expansion of my point of view. At UAM and MQ, in addition to learning from their professorate I have worked with department mates from many diverse countries, sharing good moments, chats, doubts and hopelessness; learning from our differences and similitudes; all of which, in one way or another, have enriched this thesis. I thank all of them for their help, tips, opinions and listenings, very specially to Flávio H. Sousa, Duhindu Kati (Jimmy Gómez), Timothy Lynch and Gillian Bowan. And of course to the administrator of the Anthropology department at MQ, Payel Ray, who I guess will be in every acknowledgments section of this department's theses. Since my arrival in Sydney I have been lucky to receive the support of the 'International Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship' (iMQRES), as part of the cotutelle agreement. Without this scholarship I could not have stayed in Australia. With this, I'm remembering of very valuable department mates who with great effort do their investigations without financial support. And also to those who for this reason have had to abandon Ph.D studies. I have learnt a lot also from them; and I hope that you can soon find a way to expose your works and ideas.

During my stay in Australia I have assisted at the colloquiums of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, which have been of great inspiration and where I could meet people who selflessly have provided valuable feedbacks and tips. Between them, Carolina Quesada, Luis Fernando



Angosto and Gil Hizi. Thanks very much to them. And also to Gillian Cowlshaw, for giving me some books when I arrived in Australia to start my 'Australian library' and her advice during my stay there. My thanks also go to the members of the 'Spanish and Latin American Studies' and of the 'Indigenous Studies' at Macquarie University for their help when I arrived to Australia.

I also want to thank my friends in Mérida and Extremadura, who have supported me during all these years of investigation, even though I was so immersed in 'researching the society' that I did not have time left to socialise with them. A special mention for Lara Suárez, who selflessly has made the design of this thesis cover. In Madrid and Barcelona, I also thank friends who have supported me, specially to Judit Parra in Barcelona; and in Madrid, Laura Moles and Jose Luis de la Flor, Ph.D candidates from other departments and comrades on this academic journey. In Sydney, thanks to the very interesting people I met, specially to Cecilia Guerra and Darío Vilardo for offering me a 'Latin-Uruguayan shelter' in their home and their family. And to Tichaona, for making me laugh in the last months while showing me Africa from Sydney.

Lastly, I would like to say that all my academic studies would have been impossible without two main supports: my family and the public education system. My parents, Paqui Chaves Sánchez and Tomás Montalvo Tena, and my brother, Tomás Montalvo Chaves, have been the most important and my main support. I deeply thank my parents for the efforts they have made so my brother and I could receive a university education. And to my brother for being with them when this research took me far away. Thank you for supporting me in each decision I have taken. My mum also, from a very early age has been patient to read my writings and later to listen to its translation from English into Spanish, providing her opinions and advice. Thanks for being always my best example to follow and main source of inspiration.

Many people from Extremadura who, as my parents and my grandparents, have worked hard from inside and outside of Extremadura, have made possible for us, the following generations to have the chances they never had. My generation is one of the first ones who could study in an university in Extremadura and we will always thank you for your efforts. My parents have always believed that my brother and I would have the best experiences and opportunities if we studied in public universities. Luckily, I have been able to study in three public universities, and in each one I have learnt much: the Universidad de Extremadura (my first university), the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Macquarie University. Due to the help I got from scholarships during various years I have studied in them and I have been able to get here. Without a scholarship system that fosters equality and without a public and free system of education, education would be available only to a few people. Only a good scholarship system can guarantee equal access for all social classes, genders and ethnic groups. In my case it has permitted me to receive a varied academic knowledge, but especially also great personal experiences around the world.

## *Agradecimientos*

Me siento muy afortunada por haber conocido a las personas que han formado parte de esta investigación: a las/los miembros de Entrecalles, Las Radiantes, Koori Radio y Moogahlin Performing Arts, así como de sus compañeros de profesión, familiares y amigos. Me cuesta encontrar las palabras para expresar mi agradecimiento por haber compartido vuestro tiempo conmigo, por dejarme formar parte de vuestros proyectos, por tantas buenas conversaciones y por participar en esta investigación; no sólo como protagonistas sino también ayudándome, cediéndome vuestros recursos cuando los he necesitado y enseñándome a utilizar medios radiofónicos y otros dispositivos. Pero sobre todo, gracias por esos momentos de alegría, y también tristezas, en los que casi me olvido de que estaba haciendo una investigación.

Gracias a mis directoras y director de tesis; en la UAM a Álvaro Pazos y Liliana Suárez; en la MQ Eve Vincent y Kalpana Ram. Esta investigación ha sido realizada bajo un acuerdo de cotutela entre la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid y la Macquarie University. En la MQ le agradezco a Jason Ray por su trabajo y empeño para que se firmara el acuerdo de cotutela. Gracias también a Daniel Fisher por su apoyo. En la UAM agradezco a Paloma Gómez Crespo su ayuda para que se consiguiera el acuerdo. Durante el tiempo de trabajo de campo en Madrid pude disfrutar de una Beca de Colaboración en la Escuela Politécnica Superior de la UAM, supervisada por Pablo Varona. Le agradezco a él, a las administrativas, limpiadoras, informáticos y profesorado de la EPS su apoyo y cariño que facilitó mucho mi estancia en Madrid y la investigación. Muchas gracias también por vuestra ayuda en los momentos difíciles y por vuestro gran ambiente de compañerismo.

He tenido la suerte de pasar por varios departamentos de antropología, lo que permite expandir mucho el punto de mira. En UAM y MQ, además de aprender de su profesorado he trabajado junto a compañeros de muy diversos países, compartiendo buenos momentos, charlas, dudas y desesperaciones; descubriendo nuestras diferencias y similitudes; vivencias que, de una forma u otra, han enriquecido a esta tesis. Les agradezco a todas y todos su ayuda, consejos, opiniones y escuchas, muy especialmente a Flávio H. Sousa, Duhindu Kati (Jimmy Gómez), Timothy Lynch y Gillian Bowan. Y por supuesto también a la administrativa del departamento de antropología de la Macquarie University, Payel Ray, quien imagino aparecerá en todas las secciones de agradecimiento de las tesis de este departamento. Desde mi llegada a Sydney he tenido la suerte de poder realizar la investigación con el apoyo de la beca de investigación iMQRES ‘International Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship’, como parte del acuerdo de cotutela. Una beca sin la cual no hubiera podido estar en Australia. Con ello me acuerdo de compañeras y compañeros muy valiosos que con grandísimo esfuerzo realizan investigaciones sin contar con ningún apoyo económico de beca. Y también de los que por ese motivo se vieron obligados a abandonar el doctorado. De ellos, como del resto, también he aprendido mucho, y espero que podáis encontrar pronto una forma de exponer vuestros trabajos e ideas.

Durante mi estancia en Australia he podido asistir a los colloquiums del Departamento de Antropología de la University of Sydney, que han sido de gran inspiración y donde pude conocer a gente que desinteresadamente han aportado valiosos feedbacks y consejos. Entre ellos, Carolina Quesada, Luis Fernando Angosto y Gil Hizi. Muchas gracias a ellos. Y también a Gillian Cowlshaw por los libros que me regaló al llegar a Australia que comenzaron mi ‘biblioteca australiana’, y por sus consejos durante la andadura australiana. Agradezco también la ayuda que recibí cuando llegué a Australia de los miembros del ‘Spanish and Latin American Studies’ y del ‘Indigenous Studies’ en la Macquarie University.

También quiero darles las gracias a mis amigos de Mérida y de Extremadura, quienes me han apoyado y animado todos estos años, incluso cuando estaba tan involucrada en ‘investigar a la sociedad’ que no me quedaba tiempo para socializar con ellos. Una mención especial para Lara Suárez, quien desinteresadamente ha diseñado la portada de la tesis. En Madrid y Barcelona gracias también a los amigos que me han apoyado. Especialmente a Judit Parra en Barcelona; y en Madrid, a Laura Moles y Jose Luis de la Flor, doctorandos de otros departamentos y compañeros en este recorrido. En Sydney, a gente tan interesante que conocí. Especialmente gracias a Cecilia Guerra y Darío Vilardo por ofrecerme un cobijo ‘latino-uruguayo’ en su casa y en su familia. Y a Tichaona, por hacerme reír en los últimos meses mientras me mostraba África desde Sídney.

Por último, decir que esta tesis como toda mis estudios académicos hubieran sido imposible sin dos pilares fundamentales: mi familia y un sistema de educación público. Mis padres, Paqui Chaves Sánchez y Tomás Montalvo Tena, y mi hermano, Tomás Montalvo Chaves, han sido el apoyo más importante y fundamental. Agradezco infinitamente los esfuerzos que mis padres han hecho para que mi hermano y yo hayamos recibido una educación universitaria. Y a mi hermano por estar con ellos cuando esta investigación me llevaba lejos. Gracias por apoyarme en cada camino que he tomado. Mi madre además, desde muy temprana edad, ha tenido la paciencia de leer mis escritos y más tarde de escuchar mis traducciones del inglés de lo que yo iba escribiendo, aportando sus consejos y opiniones. Gracias por ser siempre mi mejor ejemplo a seguir y fuente de inspiración.

El esfuerzo de muchos extremeños como mis padres y mis abuelos que desde dentro y fuera de Extremadura han trabajado duro han hecho posible que las siguientes generaciones tuviéramos las oportunidades que ellos no tuvieron. Mi generación ha sido una de las primeras en poder estudiar en una universidad extremeña y siempre os estaremos agradecidos por vuestros esfuerzos. Mis padres siempre han apostado porque sus hijos tuvieran estudiar en el sistema público, lo que ellos creían me daría las mejores vivencias y oportunidades. Por suerte, he podido pasar por tres universidades públicas, en cada una de la cual he aprendido mucho: la Universidad de Extremadura (mi primera universidad), la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid y la Macquarie University. Gracias a que recibí becas de ayuda durante varios años en ellas he podido llegar hasta aquí. Sin un sistema de becas justo

y sin un sistema público, libre, de calidad, la educación quedaría reducida sólo a unos pocos. Sólo con becas justas se pueden garantizar una participación igualitaria para todas las clases sociales, géneros y grupos étnicos. Lo que en mi caso, me ha permitido recibir un conocimiento académico variado, pero sobre todo también tener grandes experiencias personales por varias partes del mundo.

*Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this thesis contains names and voices of deceased persons.*

## **Contents**

**Abstract/Resumen ii**

**Acknowledgements iii**

**Agradecimientos v**

**Notes in terminology 1**

**Chapter One: Performances and broadcasts for resistance: An Introduction 8**

### *Part I: In Madrid*

**Chapter Two: Entrecalles using the *barrio*. De-institutionalisation and decolonisation of performative spaces 35**

1. Making use of the *barrio* of Lavapiés 35
2. Institutional, Alternative and *Libre* Theatre 42
3. ‘A space is the only thing I need. We’ll do the rest’ 50
4. Representation of Latin Americans in the performance industry: Mestizos, Mulattos and Indigenous roles 61
5. A manifesto against the stereotypisation of African and Latin American roles 67

**Chapter Three: De-colonising bodies and narratives from the margins 73**

1. ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’: The endless play. Actors playing themselves 73
2. ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’: bodies and narratives with different meaning 83
3. Building the body with linguistic and musical expressions 89
4. Remaining in the *barrio* 94

**Chapter Four: Latin American women using and building a feminist radio 98**

1. Incorporation of Latin American women to Las Radiantes radio 99
2. Approaching the radio from anonymity 104
3. Filling gaps with community and *libre* radios in Madrid 110
4. Representations of Latin Americans in Spanish media 114

## **Chapter Five: Diverse ways to present resistance through the radio 121**

1. Communicating with the 'outside' through radio 122
2. 'Exit', video production of Las Radiantes: feelings and bodies that come to light 127
3. 'It was like talking to the wind'. Finding ways to project their voices 134
4. Incorporating Indigeneity into the resistance 140
5. What does it mean to be a feminist? 143

### *Part II: In Sydney*

## **Chapter Six: *Welcome to Redfern*. Articulating Aboriginal resistance through media and culture 153**

1. 'Welcome to Redfern', a focus of political resistance 153
2. 'We have got a voice'. From Radio Redfern to Koori Radio 158
3. 'Brothers from another mother and sisters from another mister' 162
4. Redfern in the media and the public imaginary 168
5. Behind the CBD: The Block, Aboriginal land and Housing projects 177

## **Chapter Seven: Between governmentality and informality 183**

1. Swearing after 10 p.m. 184
2. Suspected of misbehaviour 191
3. Filling gaps with volunteers 194
4. Advertising 'good models' 197
5. Mothers are responsible 200

## **Chapter Eight: Decolonising dominant representations 203**

1. 'Authenticities' and 'Inauthenticities' 204
2. 'Real' Aboriginal people in Sydney? 209
3. It's Aboriginal music! 214
4. Any Black music today? 218

## **Chapter Nine: Breaking boundaries to express multiple selves 225**

1. Gadigal music label: Producing music at Koori Radio 225
2. 'Puttin' The Soul Back Into Sydney' 228
3. Language and music as resistance 235
4. From the National Black Theatre to Moogahlin Performing Arts 238
5. A same tale and two different stories. De-Westernisation of performance 241

6. What makes an Aboriginal play Aboriginal? 244
7. Performance and music Before and After Cook. Some final thoughts 246

**Conclusion: Among Sydney and Madrid 248**

**Conclusiones: Entre Sídney y Madrid 257**

**Bibliography 267**



## Notes in terminology

We live in times of profound intercultural encounters and post-colonisation, but also of disobedience and resistance. Visual images are re-presenting these encounters and relationships through many artifacts, such as newspapers, television programs, radios, films, spectacles, music, performances... Since visual images are cultural products, they can transmit power relationships and legitimate stereotypes of 'Others' who are sexually, racially, class, as savages, homosexually, criminally... inferiorised. Yet counter-hegemonic projects that offer 'Other' visual images also act to subvert and combat such legitimization. In relation to these, this thesis offers four cases studies about resistance by subjects who try to invert their attributed 'inferiorisation' through cultural projects. It examines how Aboriginal people in Sydney and Latin Americans in Madrid are employing radio and theatre to *decolonise* the residues of colonialism in the cultural industry and in power relationships. The examples in this thesis reflect specific local relations of power and colonial legacies, but also struggles for professional and personal advantages of people who work in minority radios and theatre companies. These are the Latin American theatre company Entrecalles, the Latin American members of the radio Las Radiantes, the Aboriginal Australian radio Koori Radio and the Aboriginal Australian theatre company Moogahlin Performing Arts. These pages serve to clarify the use I give to some of the terms that I will employ in this thesis in the analysis of these four cases in order to avoid generalisation and essentialism.

The first term used for the title of this thesis, *decolonisation*, can sound totalizing if we are to understand 'decolonisation' as a full political process that ends with territorial independency. Rather I am using the term 'decolonisation' as a critical way to think as proposed by various authors. As the Portuguese sociologist Bonaventura de Sousa Santos signals, the end of political colonisation does not mean the end of colonialism in mentalities and subjectivities, in culture and epistemology. The Martinique scholar Frantz Fanon explains that 'decolonisation' is the transition period from the colonial thinking—that claims loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the White man's values—to the moment in which the 'colonised masses mock at these very values, insult them and vomit them up' (Fanon 1963: 43). The Spanish anthropologist José González Alcantud asserts that to be 'decolonial' means to be permanently deconstructive and to demystify power (González Alcantud 2011: 249). The Argentinean semiologist Walter Mignolo proposes a 'critical border thinking' for decolonisation and signals that the decolonial option is *undisciplined*. He reveals that the knowledge and subjectivities that operate in societies are the result of disciplinary forms and a colonial matrix. So, the decolonial option must be undisciplined and try to respond to the racial and gendered colonial matrix that surges in the rhetoric of modernity. The Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel takes these Mignolo's ideas and asserts that decolonial thinking probably began soon after the arrival of the coloniser (in Ruiz Trejo 2013) but decolonisation does not involve colonised people breaking with all the elements of modernisation or deny its influence (Grosfoguel 2006). Rather, as I aim to show in this thesis, it can involve providing distinct elements and strategies in order to dismantle and demystify the power.

Thus, this thesis offers four instances of Aboriginal and Latin American people using cultural elements to decolonise their mentalities and subjectivities through creative works developed in two radios and two theatre companies, which in turn help them to speak loudly and present resistance to the ways in which colonial relations still operate in various spheres of Australian and Spanish societies, including the cultural industries.

I am going to employ the terms media and cultural industries on numerous occasions. As mentioned before, these terms can encompass many practices that are developed in various forms of production, such as magazines, radio, films, documentaries, performance and TV-series. As Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in their work about the culture industry assert, the products of an industrial culture are such that they can be consumed even in a state of distraction (Horkheimer & Adorno 2006:45-46). I will refer to the mass cultural media as the one which is more easily disseminated in our societies because some dominant groups have more opportunity to make the rules, to organise meaning; while I will refer to minority media and artistic practices as those engaged in by Others who have less power to produce their definitions. In this regard, Dick Hebdige names the latter as producers of ‘subcultures’, as a mechanism of semantic disorder and contemporary blockage in the system of representation (Hebdige 2006:153). As Stuart Hall signals, it is always possible to decode dominant meanings as well as the institutional, political, ideological order imprinted in them (Hall 2006: 169). So from this Hall assertion, I trace four case studies of counter-hegemonic radio and theatre projects that offer a critical view of dominant codes of representation.

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This is not a comparison in the conventional sense but a comparison of four distinct cases that exemplify some of the complex ways in which theatre and radio practices shift articulated identities and discuss national politics and market economies. To discuss national political and market economies involves breaking with many Occidental binaries that operate in them which give social order. These binaries are not reduced solely to the dualisms such as ‘men/women’, ‘black/white’, ‘indigenous/assimilated’, ‘worker/middle class’, but an amalgam of them working in articulation with others such as ‘traditional/modern’, ‘authentic/inauthentic’, ‘cultural/symbolic capital’. As can be seen in the work of the anthropologist Lourdes Méndez about non-Occidental art (1995, 2006), these kinds of binaries help to maintain in operation the dualism ‘Us’ —as Occidental and rulers of art— and ‘Them’ — as Others subjected to the rulers’ norms. As Sally Price explains in her regarded work “Primitive art in civilized places” when the Occidental “accepts” the Other —and their art— it does so as an act of kindness, but not in an egalitarian way (Price 1993:44). Lourdes Méndez studies these relationships in three continents (Africa, Australia and America). She explains how European artists — who are recognised as vanguardist artists—have helped themselves by using elements of societies which were colonised while artists from colonised societies have been neo-primitivised —when presenting traditionalist elements— or accused of inauthenticity—when presenting Occidental elements. Specifically, she explains how Aboriginal Australians who live in Sydney produce visual art

without elements of ‘traditionalism’ but —as well as those artists who live in the so-called ‘traditional’ or ‘remote’ areas— are seeking their identity through cultural practices (Méndez 1995:191). For the case of Latin American artists, she explains how their art has been slighted in European and the U.S. markets for being specially hybrid and imitating of the Western European and U.S. modernism (Méndez Pérez 2006:29). As we are going to see in the cases of this thesis, the reality is more complex than the simplistic dualism ‘traditional/modern’. The analysis of the creative works by Latin American and Aboriginal people show diverse subjectivities and abilities to use distinct elements claiming their identities.

These discussions will appear on numerous occasions in the thesis and I will employ these terms ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ but with the intention to break with the binary and its meanings. One of the best way to break with this dualism is by dismantling the logics of the term ‘acculturation’. In order to better analyse the cultural works of Latin Americans and Aboriginal people in Sydney outside the traditionalist opposition, I will use the perspective of *transculturación* —transculturation—of the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1981, 1983). Ortiz coined this term in the 1940s to explain the influence that Yoruba, Congo and other African populations have had for centuries on the music, instruments, performance, dance, theatre and other cultural productions in Cuba and the south of Spain —many of which nowadays are cultural national symbols in both countries. His research findings are nowadays very useful in two senses: firstly, because his work is one of the first and few ethnographies that has acknowledged the Black influence on the colonisers’ cultures by describing the abilities of African slaves to maintain cultural elements and to bring cultural values to the dominant society. And secondly, because his work has disputed the use of the already extended term of ‘acculturation’ that so insistently has been announcing the death of the so called “primitive” cultures. Whereas ‘acculturation’ points to the process of transit from one culture to another, *transculturación* alludes to the many multiple phenomena originated after the transmutation of cultures —although they frequently occur after painful process of colonisation. This perspective acknowledges that in all populations —in a faster or slower way— cultural transit provoked by the contact with other societies occurs. Yet this does not simply mean adopting a new culture, which is the ‘acculturation’ argument, rather it involves a rootlessness (*desculturación*) and also the creation of new cultural phenomena (*neoculturación*) born from both a mother and a father (Ortiz 1983:87-90). This perspective sets up a starting point for deeper analysis of the ethnographic data of Sydney and Madrid fieldwork that acknowledges that, as Ortiz asserts:

a *White* person transculturates as well as a *Black* person does; and also as well as a mythology, melody, rhythm and a drum transculturate (Ortiz 1981:128).

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I am employing also a series of names in this thesis that can be highly controversial for their historical racialisation, such as Black and Aboriginal or for deterritorialisation and racialisation in the word ‘immigrant’. However, the emphasis in this thesis is to see how subjects that have been labelled as

such from the outside use these terms to provide them with other meanings and as contingent signs that can group and mobilise people. The names I use in this thesis are probably not satisfactory for all of my informants. In the Australian context, the term 'Indigenous' is employed in academic spheres to refer to both Aboriginal people from the Australia continent and Torres Strait Islanders —Aboriginal people from the northern Australian islands. Katherine Lambert-Pennington, in her study of Aboriginal people in the Sydney area of La Perouse, employs the term Koori as it is accepted to refer to Indigenous people living in southeastern Australia (Lambert-Pennington 2012:131). However, a series of responses from my informants has led me to maintain the term 'Aboriginal' in its adjectival form. A considerable amount of the Indigenous people in Sydney area are originally from many other parts of Australia —not just the southeast— and they do not employ the term Koori to refer to themselves but instead use the name of their mob and 'Aboriginal'. In this regard, one of my informants told me that he had internalised the word 'Aboriginal' as identity inside the Koori Sydney area:

'I'm not Koori; my mob is in the Western Australia. And sometimes I don't understand the way Kooris make things. But we are all Aboriginals. Because that's what we were called: Aboriginals. So, yeah, if you are going to call us Aboriginals, we'll be Aboriginals. But we are changing it and making a good thing of it. And now that we've got it, to make Aboriginality to work for us, Australians want us to identify Australians? They say we have to move on and identify just Australians. Oh, no. We'll keep Aboriginals!'

Similar, when I interviewed a young Aboriginal broadcaster in the Aboriginal radio station Koori Radio, he refused to provide his mob name: 'I'm Aboriginal. Just leave it like that.' However these are not homogeneous answers. Some of the people I talked with in Sydney refused the term Aboriginal or Indigenous and advocated following transnational Indigenous claims as 'First Nations'; while others disagreed, arguing that such a term could reproduce the logic of 'first citizens' and hence 'second' and 'third citizens'. These are open discussions that I do not attempt to unpack (it would be ridiculous as a non-Aboriginal Australian to try it). Rather I am trying to expose diverse opinions and explain why I use such terms in this thesis in spite of their historical racialisation. As said, I am trying to analyse how the word 'Aboriginal' is utilised by people —from the many different Aboriginal nations in Australia — who have been labelled as such and are making of it something good for their empowerment just as the 'Black Power movement' does with the term 'Black'.

In the same line I am employing terms such as 'urban/remote' Aboriginal people to explain the division between people who live in big cities and other areas which had first contact with colonisers and those who live in smaller areas which are remote from the first settlements in Australia. Yet as well I use the term 'urban Aboriginal' to highlight that, as diverse authors signal, anthropology still has not paid enough attention to the strong assertions by Aboriginal people in areas such as Sydney (which in fact has the largest Aboriginal population in Australia) and other southeastern areas that have a rich cultural way of life and remain undervalued and under-researched (Gibson 2013:56; Peters-Little 2003:18; Neale 2003:106; Cowlshaw 2003; Cowlshaw & Gibson 2012).

Similarly, the postcoloniality in Spain remains unattended, although there are scholars who pay attention to the colonial legacy and power relationships in Spanish society with subjects from former colonies (Stolcke 1995; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; Suárez Navaz 2012; Ruiz Trejo 2005). The anthropologist Verena Stolcke dismantles how the word ‘immigrant’ in the European metropolis is utilised with a fundamentalist character to refer to subjects who arrive from former colonies and other countries considered inferior (Stolcke 1995). Being more specific, in the Spanish context, Ruth Rubio, Irene Sobrino, Alberto Martín and Francisco Moreno (Rubio et al. 2012) explain how the colonial past has played a crucial role in defining Spanish nationality legislation. Different from most of European countries, Spain has never had legislation exclusively focused on nationality. Former colonies enjoy a series of “concessions” over the rest of the migrants. Nationals of Latin American countries, Equatorial Guinea, Philippines, plus Portugal, Sephardic Jews and Andorra need two years of residence to acquire Spanish nationality and can maintain a dual citizenship, while it is not the case for other immigrants who need up to ten years of residence to opt for Spanish nationality and cannot maintain such dual nationality (2012: 3). Although this law was made before the Franco dictatorship, with him it took a deep colonial meaning, since Franco’s ideology embraced ‘the narrative of Spain’s continuation of the long lost Spanish Empire of glorious times’ with a ‘spiritual mission’ (2012: 9). In spite of these “concessions” many of the people originally from the mentioned countries remain labelled in Spanish societies as ‘immigrants’. Most of the Latin Americans and Africans who have participated in this research hold Spanish nationality or have been living in Spain for a long time, however, the ‘immigrant’ character is never fully abandoned by the reception society and I am ‘forced’ to employ this term to explain relationships of power and the way that they are represented in Spanish cultural industry.

Faced with this situation we might ask whether the same meaning the word ‘immigrant’ in Spain that applies to someone arriving from a former colony or a country considered ‘inferior’ applies to someone who arrives from the U.S. for instance (including Afro descents). I believe it does not and that each case should be analysed in relation to different markers such as social class. However it is significant the way that postcolonialism is intersectioned with other markers such as the racial, the ethnic and linguistic. For instance, in Australia I met a Mexican guy who was fluent in English and asserted that he had experienced some racist attitudes towards himself when he was visiting Barcelona but completely changed when he spoke to people in English and pretended to be from the U.S. This is an instance that helps me to explain that power relationships are complex and must be analyzed in an intersectioned manner with postcolonialism in the inferiorisation of specific ethnicities and nationalities. Specifically this instance invites reflection on how colonialism and racism re-invent themselves in the present and the new transnational mobilisation.

Verena Stolcke details how European politicians and scholars invoke the term ‘xenophobia’ along with ‘racism’ to describe mounting anti-immigrant animosity in their countries. As she explains, ‘xenophobia’ literally means “hostility toward strangers and all that is foreign”. Yet the reality is that

there are subjects or nationalities more vulnerable to being labelled as ‘immigrants’. In liberal European societies, conventional racism has transmuted to a cultural fundamentalism in which ‘postcolonial immigrants’ are perceived as naturally inferior or strangers to the polity, the state, the empire or the commonwealth. Cultural fundamentalism legitimates the exclusion of foreigners as strangers. Thus, what has been claimed as ‘modern racism’ or ‘modern Western racism’ rationalises claims of national superiority or sociopolitical disqualification and economic exploitation of groups of individuals within a polity of attributing certain moral, intellectual, or social defects supposedly grounded in their “racial” endowment. The markers that are employed to identify a “race” may be phenotypical or constructed with other elements such as linguistic. Hence racism operates with a particularistic criterion of hierarchical classification in which racist doctrines are categorical, concealing the sociopolitical relationships which generate the hierarchy and the inferiorisation of “others” (Stolcke 1995:7).

The word ‘racism’ is —as well as ‘sexism’— ‘an ugly word’ that sounds heavy which not everybody is willing to admit. Its premises has transmuted historically passing through biologist racism, to cultural racism, to modern terms such as ‘elegant contemporary racism’, that González Alcantud describes as a ‘more subtle racism’ that acts through specific cultural dexterities difficult to identify such as accents (González Alcantud 2011:34). Similarly, Teun van Dijk defines contemporary racism as a social system of domination of a specific kind of power of one group over other groups. Thus, whereas sexism is defined in terms of domination of women by men, and on the basis of constructed gender differences, racism is based on constructed differences of ethnicity, corporeal appearance, origin, culture and/or language on the basis of superiority (van Dijk 2005:1-2). In the Australian terrain, Gillian Cowlshaw and Barry Morris explain how racism in relation to Aboriginal people flourishes as a hidden discourse in a number of public arenas and institutions (Cowlshaw & Morris 1997). There exist many definitions of the term ‘racism’. I am bringing these authors’ perspectives to light to signal that I share with them their insistence on identifying racist power relationships where they happen even though they can go unnoticed or are identified by other terms more ‘elegant’.

Continuing with the terms used for other subjects studied in this thesis, this time Latin Americans, I should explain that this term or the one of ‘Latina/o’ are nomenclatures that the majority of the participants in this research have embraced in the diaspora, responding to their social position in Spanish society while in dispute with the postcolonial character of migratory policies. Yet similar to Aboriginal people in Australia, I do not assume that the terms ‘Latina/o’ are embraced by all the people originally from Latin American countries. As a Colombian friend in Sydney told me, he did not identify as ‘Latino’ or ‘Latin American’ since he had had bad experiences while trying to pass Chilean borders: ‘The day we can freely move around Latin American countries as you do in the European Union I will call myself ‘Latin American’. Meanwhile, I’m Colombian’. These are experiences that mark the willingness of a person to adopt an identity or reject it. In relation to the subjects of this thesis in Madrid, I will explain how Latin Americans from many different countries embrace such a

term in Spain to articulate diverse subjectivities and experiences into a shared political identity of resistance.

This brings me to explain that the theoretical frameworks that I have employed for this thesis —such as the theory of articulation, decolonial and postcolonial perspectives— cannot account for everything and cannot be employed to explain all the relationships in the world. Yet they are very useful in the two contexts of postcolonialism where I am employing them and to explain European dominance in the power relationships. Either terms such as White Australians or Spanish can be understood in a essentialist form. I employ these terms to explain power relationships and to highlight the dominant society, although my attempt is to break the binary ‘Us’/‘Other’. One of the options in this thesis to break with this binary has been through the comparison itself. As I will fully explain in chapter one, I am not following a ‘classic’ ethnographic methodology that compares the dominant society (Us) with the minority (Other), but minority groups between themselves.

## **Chapter One: Performances and broadcasts for resistance: An Introduction**

Sunday, 20th June 2013: Entrecalles performance at La Tabacalera, Madrid

I arrive at the squat La Tabacalera a few hours before the performance of Entrecalles. As usual, actors are arranging everything for the performance and Nico, the technician, is working on the lights and with the laptop. When the audience gets inside I give them the play flyers. The space gets full of people, the majority Spanish and also some Latin Americans and Africans. Actors and audience seem to have a big rapport today. Especially the audience reacts and claps strongly in a few scenes: the scene about migration borders and the scene of the first dinghy in history —when Colombus arrived to America. Before the latter scene, actors selected two persons from the audience to perform with them the Spanish colonisation in the Americas. They select two unknown girls who will do the role of the Catholic Kings —Isabel and Fernando— who initiated the colonisation. Actors, kneeling on the floor, are asking them permission to start the colonisation. Yet the girls, in their role of the Catholic Kings, decide to alter history and answer they will not support the colonisation in the Americas and Africa. Actors improvise some sentences in order to continue with what the play shows in the following scene: the arrival of Colombus in the Americas and their contact with Indigenous people.

It's a good day today. When the performance finishes the audiences claps with enthusiasm. Then Carlos, the director of the Entrecalles company, as he usually does, takes the floor: 'We're the Latin American theatre company Entrecalles. If you want to follow us you can find the information in the flyer. We'll keep performing. Sometimes, in the most unexpected places. Thank you very much for coming'.

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Friday, 27th June 2014: Klub Koori concerts at the Red Rattler Theatre, Sydney

Kevin and Dave, two radio staff, arrive at Koori Radio and ask me: 'You're coming to the concerts tonight!, aren't you?' I got the ticket with them a few days ago, but they're excited confirming with the people who will assist. They've been organising these concerts for the Klub Koori concert-sessions that Koori Radio does about twice-three times a year. Tonight there will be four Aboriginal bands playing in a non-Aboriginal venue. I go to the venue with Dave, one of the signers and Karl —the production coordinator at the radio. I've been before with some other members of the radio during their broadcasts at some event in the city, but this is the first time there is a concert for the Klub Koori since I've been in Sydney. We arrive at the Red Rattler Theatre and already there are some people who are volunteering helping around. There is an Aboriginal woman on the door and Auntie Rose, a respected and known woman in the Aboriginal community in Sydney who will later present the



concerts. Dave goes to talk with the venue owner. I see the owner moving her lips saying yes. Then Dave smiles and takes two flags from a bag he's carrying. They are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags that he puts on the ceiling.

Another radio staff, Greg, arrives about an hour later with all the stuff to record the concerts. The venue gets full of people both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Greg prepares everything to record and Aunty Rose opens the session with her speech. She ends it by saying: 'And thanks to Koori Radio which is doing a great job tonight, also recording all the concerts.'

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The above ethnographic instances compare two different scenes. The first scene presents the performance of the Latin American theatre company Entrecalles in Madrid, interacting with the audience and provoking a reaction from two Spanish girls in the audience against Spanish colonialism. The second scene presents the broadcasts of the Aboriginal radio station Koori Radio in Sydney, placing Aboriginal symbols during the performance of Aboriginal musicians in a non-Aboriginal venue. These scenes present some differences and some commonalities. The first scene involves the presence of Latin Americans in a former colonial power, Spain; the second involves the survival of Aboriginal people in a former British colony. These are useful instances that help us to introduce their commonality regarding how cultural and media practices can help to contest the residues of colonialism in the present.

Radio and theatre are two of the most culturally-mediated elements used worldwide. As the Tanzanian feminist Fatma Alloo asserts, they are two of the best tools to give a voice to minority groups and nowadays still have much influence on the population (Alloo 2013:65). In part, they are present in so many societies because they can be executed with little means. Radio can take the form of a radio station with a licence, yet as well it can be relayed on the internet and without a licence. Theatre can be performed on the streets, the underground, theatre venues or simply a room. As well, theatre and radio have an educative role: radio has been historically used in many countries to help the literacy of people, also for broadcasting theatre-novels. Theatre is a way in which a community narrates a story that transmits values to the rest of the community. Furthermore, theatre and radio are two powerful elements to transmit voices; voices that can be of resistance. In addition, the exposition of those voices can activate the articulation of political identities.

This thesis works with the idea that these elements can help minority groups to articulate political identities and present resistance in two different urban societies in the world —Madrid and Sydney— where the postcolonial is still an unfinished relation of power. The comparative endeavour draws on the diverse way in which that minority groups use artistic and media expressions to project their subjectivities into political identities of resistance that face and decode (Hall 2006) postcolonial stereotypes. Consequently, the comparative endeavour is also seeing how the colonial reinvents itself in diverse parts of the globe, responding to two different old colonisations: the Spanish and the British.

The different social worlds that are presented in this thesis with four case studies corroborate that both the postcolonial and the resistance to the postcolonial are intersectioned in a contingent manner. The analysis of Entrecalles, Las Radiantes, Koori Radio and Moogahlin Performing Arts and their cultural and mediated practices demonstrate how useful these elements are to present and articulate an identity of resistance. Additionally, they illuminate another series of concerns that are exposed in this thesis in regard to their formal relationship with the state as the organising body of the society, their informal relationship with other minority groups, subjectivities, corporeal-political agency and other social domains.

From chapters two to nine, I will explore how, in each specific context, theatre or radio animates political strategies by subjectification into linguistic, narrative, corporeal, musical and recorded creations that present diverse results able to be compared. Then, this thesis is intended as an argument for ethnographic comparative methodologies by presenting two different contexts of analysis and four case studies. As I will further detail, I am presenting a multi-sited ethnographic that contributes to reflecting how cultural and mediated practices can enable the transformation of social life of two post-colonial groups: Latin Americans in Madrid and urban-Aboriginal people in Sydney. Even though there are clear differences between them —and of course there are wide social differences in the people who are inscribed inside these two nomenclatures— it is not a coincidence that for instance the theatre companies Entrecalles and Moogahlin Performing Arts both think of performance as suitable for creating roles and narratives that are dominantly missing in the mainstream performance industry. It is not a coincidence either that Latin American women use Las Radiantes and Aboriginal people use Koori Radio to project their voices that are dominantly missing in the mainstream media. The challenge for this thesis is to put these four worlds, with their differences and commonalities, together.

I am presenting in this chapter a comparative analysis to see how their practices enable decolonisation and re-articulation of political identities to resist and foster social change. Then, from chapters two to nine, I will develop more specific analysis that requires, firstly, to analyse each case study separately; i.e. I do not assume that the experiences of Latin American women in Las Radiantes are the same as Latin Americans in Entrecalles; either that the experiences of Aboriginal people in Koori Radio can directly refer to the experiences of Moogahlin Performing Arts members, even though they are placed in the same area or location and at times collaborate between themselves. Secondly, the analysis involves delving into other questions and more specific analysis of each case that will enable seeing the intersectioned modes —gender, class, ethnic, sexual, linguistic and other differences—in which power relations operate in societies. Therefore, this thesis is delving into several arguments for the ways that the practices developed inside each radio and theatre group are inducing thinking about other ideas: use of the spaces of the city, self-management, the art of governing and the state as a social orderer, stereotyped representations of the subject studies on mainstream cultural and media industries and their ability to run their own cultural and mediated projects. For this aim, I am showing in chapters two to nine various ethnographic instances that sustain the idea that colonial power

relations are not extinct but they reinvent themselves and come to the present with many different faces. To comprehend this complexity I will firstly explain the research design, literature and methodology that has shaped this thesis, to later show how I have grouped the results of the four ethnographies into various conceptual axes.

### *Research Design, Literature and Methodology*

This thesis is an articulated ethnography in various senses. Articulated as a method to bring together diverse theories and political thoughts able to explain social phenomena in various parts of the world. Some of the theoretical frameworks I use in this thesis suggest to rethink the colonial in the present. Others highlight the intersectioned matrices of oppression of ‘race’ gender, class, ethnicity and others social differentiators in media and cultural practices. And others focus on cultural projects of resistance. As well, this thesis is articulated in the sense that the circumstances of each case study — for instance some groups moved around the cities, others stayed in the same place— has led me to adopt a varied range of ethnographic methods. Yet also, the concept of articulation helps to explain that the words ‘Latin American’ and ‘Aboriginal’ are fluid and susceptible to change. I am adopting the theory of articulation from Stuart Hall (1986; also in Hale 2002, Clifford 2013 and Avtar Brah 2011). Avtar Brah defines articulation as the transformer element of relational configurations, as relationships that are historically contingent in specific contexts (Brah 2011:139). The articulation of political discourses and practices of groups of people carve social relationships, the position of subjects and their subjectivities. Subjectivity is key in the sense that it is the space where the processes that give sense to our relationship with the world are developed; it is the way in which the subjects experiment with themselves as identity. Thus, as Avtar Brah explains, identity is marked by multiple positions of the subject, so that it cannot be fixed or just one, but a multiplicity of relationships constantly changing (2011:152).

I find very interesting this approach because as Brah asserts, if identity is a process, then it is very problematic to talk about identities as if they were already constituted. It is then better to talk about collective identities as a political process that results from the attempt of groups to register their subjectivities through collective experiences, as for instance the Black Power has done. This perspective helps me to explain how the ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Latin American’ identities are articulated based on a political attitude and cultural practices as well as shared colonial/postcolonial experiences. Under the use of these terms, the subjects of this study design different strategies that are able to mobilise people. Thus, the objective of this thesis is to see how cultural practices of Aboriginal people and Latin Americans allow the articulation of subjectivities into a political identity in a specific moment. By saying this, I am also trying to highlight that the results of this thesis are unfinished and dialogical and correspond to a specific context and time in which I did fieldwork, since, as the theory of articulation sustains, articulation of identities is limited in time and can end or be re-articulated at

any moment. As well, by saying this I am trying to avoid that the results of this thesis are extended to other Latin American and Aboriginal people. As Stuart Hall argues, articulation is not necessary, determined, absolute nor essential for all time, it can potentially be transformed, end or, importantly, it can be re-articulated with more subjects (1986:54). As we will see in this thesis, the possibility of re-articulations is very determinant to understand how Aboriginal people and Latin Americans create allies with other ethnic groups.

Thus, articulation becomes a key word in this thesis as a theoretical framework that acts as a thread through all the chapters. I will go back to the moment that this thesis was designed to show which are the theoretical questions and methodological challenges that surged during this thesis research period, from 2012 to 2016.

The idea for this thesis emanated in Madrid from another research I did in 2009 for the 'Diploma de Estudios Avanzados' grade at UAM. I got interested in researching the female members of a group of Latin Americans of the organisation 'Latin Kings and Queens' in Barcelona who were organising two musical and theatre projects to counteract the image of criminality that this organisation had in Spanish society. Initially I was focused on artistic expressions and I was paying little attention to the media. My interest was to observe how this group tried to extrapolate their artistic project to Madrid with another Latin American organisation in the city with the same name. However, in Madrid, I observed that I had to expand my perspective if I wanted to fully comprehend the chances that this group had to promote their work and messages. During their artistic project launch in Madrid and their meetings with some members of the organisation in Madrid and institutional figures, mass journals were full of reports about their attributed criminal character instead of their projects; and included in some case reports photos of a Latin American man who was handcuffed and seized by the police and who had nothing to do with this organisation and their artistic project (Montalvo Chaves 2012). From this time on I realised the power of the visual media and that if I wanted to see the political aspect of art I had to analyse how the cultural industries reproduce the dominant corporate and commercial culture, 'excluding discourses and images that contest the established social system' (Durham & Kellner 2006:xii, xiv). Thus, I saw that I had to include the analysis of artifacts such as newspapers, television programs, films and music, as well as the act of attending concerts and performances. So I decided that for a Ph.D thesis I would include two groups of Latin Americans who develop both theatre and radio which have become powerful elements to contest the commercial culture's representation of Latin Americans in Madrid. I decided to focus on radio instead of other media because of the chance that radio gives to work with little means.

Around this time I was getting very interested in postcolonial feminist literature that directed this first research and also helped me in two articulated senses: one interpersonal and another academic (if I can separate them). I have to go back to my childhood to explain it. When child I spent much time with my mother on her job with Romanies (Gipsies) women in one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in my hometown. My mother was involved in one of the first social and educative projects done with

Romaníes in Spain in the 1980s, who are one of the most racially marked and marginalised ethnic groups in Spanish and European history. After school I went to my mother's job and I did my homework there while my mother worked with them. These Romaníes women and I were learning to write and read at the same time. As well, my mother took me to some feminist meetings that were happening at that time in my hometown which were looking at the feminist movements of big cities of Spain to build a feminist agenda. I do remember my mother and Elena, her friend and job-mate of Hispano-Moroccan background, arguing with other women in the meetings saying that the reality of women from our region —Extremadura— in general and Romaníes in particular had little to do with the reality of women from big cities which had been industrialised and had a different economic development history to ours. We should not just copy this feminist model, but think in our particularities, they both argued. Years later, when I started to travel to those big cities of Spain I embraced feminism there where I found women's struggles, but at times I also 'fled' from it. It represented me as a woman; it did not as a woman from a south-western area which is attributed to be the poorest, the most backward, illiterate, "traditional", voiceless and subordinated region in Spain. What I have frequently faced when in contact with some feminisms and in other social worlds in other Spanish regions was much ignorance towards my own people and an attitude of condescension. Through the work of Latin American, African, Indigenous and postcolonial feminists (Anzaldúa 1999, hooks et al. 2004, Lugones 2008, Sandoval 1991, Suárez & Hernández 2008, Mama et al. 2013, Weedon 2002, Haraway 1995, Tripp 2008, Mahmood 2008), I 'reconciled' with feminism. I found fascinating a similar claim by these academics: they claimed hegemonic feminisms should include diverse subjectivities in feminist agendas and place the triple axis of 'gender, class and ethnicity' into the focus of analysis. This personal reconciliation led me to be 'alert' to see whether this axis of oppression with other series of social markers such as sexual and linguistic differences would appear in my case studies. The differences between subjects in studies and the dominant society could be based in many different axes of oppression and the internal differences between themselves. As will be seen in this thesis, I have adopted this intersectionality from authors such as Patricia Hill Collins (n/d) as an analysis which claims that the systems of class, 'race', gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age are constructed as features of social organisation.

Many of these academics also shared an interest in placing the postcolonial in the centre of discussion and pointed at the residues of colonialism in the present of former colonies and the former European metropolis. This piqued more of my attention into postcolonial and decolonial literature. I got immersed in colonial critical theorists that arrived from Latin American and African scholars. Voices from the 'colonality of power' theory point out that when direct colonial rule from a metropolis disappears, forms of coloniality—in its many disguises such as racial, cultural, economic, political, sexual, gendered and knowledge based oppression—persist. The Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2000a, 2000b; also Quijano & Wallerstein 1992) was the one who coined the term of 'coloniality of power', which criticises the Eurocentrism that positions the beginning of modernity in Enlightenment and democracy in Europe and asserts that the modern global world is intrinsically associated with the

historical and global changes that occurred after the colonisation of the Americas from 1492. Followers of this perspective, such as Pablo Quintero (2010), Arturo Escobar (2004), Walter Mignolo (2008) and Ramón Grosfoguel (2006, 2008) signal that colonisation and imperialism are masked under different forms of racial, cultural, sexual, economic, linguistic oppressions that structure multiple social hierarchies. What these scholars argue is that coloniality does not act solely in a specific part of history or zone but it becomes an extended relation of power; i.e. it can operate in different scenarios and can be defined —following Grosfoguel— as the political, economic, cultural, epistemic, spiritual, sexual and linguistic exploitation/oppression of ethno-racial subordinated groups by dominant ethno-racial groups with or without colonial administrations (2006:159).<sup>1</sup>

By the time I assimilated these readings I had decided already that I would continue working with Latin American organisations in Madrid that were working on artistic and mediated projects. Yet the idea to compare these cases with other cases in the world got motivated by these critical feminists and authors of the coloniality of power who were dismantling the world system and who presented the colonial world system as an unfinished and extended relation of power in multiple areas of the globe. Literature that finally would propel me to take a comparative methodology were earlier works of Eric Williams (2011), Frantz Fanon (2008, 1963), Aimé Césaire (2006) and Pablo González Casanova (2006). Eric Williams (2011) in his study about capitalism and slavery asserts that from the times of the Americas colonisation by the hands of Spain, Portugal and England, slavery constituted an economic asset for the coloniser obtained by the exploitation of Indigenous peoples first and Africans later. And although racism was not the cause of slavery, the phenotypes of slaves were used to justify that exploitation; accentuated by biologists/evolutionists theories of ‘race’ from the eighteenth century that divided the world between ‘inferior/superior’ ‘primitive/civilised’ and ‘traditional/modern’. These ideas extended worldwide through colonisation in India, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc. by the hands of the mentioned countries joined to France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Belgium (see Todorov 1998). Simultaneously, these ideas settled the Eurocentric racial model that put Whites as superior and the Rest as inferior to the benefit of global capitalism. However, when the processes of detachment of a colony from the colonial rule by the metropolis emerged, the racial scheme was not suppressed. Furthermore, those countries which maintained a Eurocentric identity such as Canada, U.S., Australia and Occidental Europe constructed their nation-states under this racial model.

Intellectuals interested in decolonial thinking such as those of the Negritude movement were also in line with Eric William’s arguments, signaling the effects of colonialism and racism in the present.

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<sup>1</sup> Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (2011) expands the ideas of colonisation, coloniality and postcolonialism and signals that these perspectives are insufficient to explain the reality and remarks on the way that coloniality can live with other forms of power. He suggests a ‘post-imperialist’ label to define the most current juncture in which nation-states deal with transnationalisms and the effects of flexible capitalism. He stresses that forms of coloniality, postcolonialism and internal colonialism can coexist in different nations with the ‘nationality of power’. Furthermore, colonialist structural power coexists with world system forces —expanding capitalist forces— and post-colonial projects with the hierarchies established in a specific nation. So that, he understands that forms of control emerge from different forces in which the local, global and national live in conjuncture.

Aimé Césaire—one of the pioneers of the Negritude movement and antiracist theories and precursor of postcolonial studies—published *Discours sur les colonialisme* (2006), where he identified racism against Blacks in Africa and the Caribbean and criticised the universalism of Eurocentrism. He stated that the majority of ‘Black countries’ live under a colonial regime—including some of those which achieved independence—and this is also reflected into Black populations in countries such as the U.S. His disciple Frantz Fanon (2008, 1963) adds that not only Africa and other societies subjected to colonisation has a racist structure, but also Europe. He points to colonial racism inside a logic of ‘superior/inferior’ feelings that have been created by the European colonisers and operate for personal gain. One of the most interesting inputs of Fanon was that he identified this racist and colonial scheme in one of its most subtle ways, manifested through cultural practices. What it makes clear is that a decolonisation process must also pass through a *cultural decolonisation*. González Casanova (2006) will later signal the colonial relations that remain inside a country after formal independency.

Influenced by all this literature and after the experience of the previous fieldwork I designed a comparative project able to exemplify two societies where postcolonial relationships that implicated some of the above mentioned countries were still operating: Madrid as a former colonial society which has received an important number of Latin American people in the country from the 1990s; and Sydney, as a former colonised society by British which concentrates the largest number of Aboriginal people living in Australia. Geographies of power have been thus understood in this thesis as a ‘cultural traffic that wove colonies together into imperial systems as well as linking colonies to the imperial center’ (Ballantyne & Burton 2005: 417) with the arrival of postcolonial migrants. This involved drawing the attention to the world-system as no longer spatialised into cores and peripheries or into divisions such as First/Third World, colonised/coloniser societies, West/East (Said 1978), etc. The aim of this comparison is to analyse diverse creative forms to articulate resistance in different places and spaces, to then ‘dislocate colonialism’ from diverse angles instead of using a solely monocultural logic (Paunksnis 2015). By this I am not attempting to produce a vast theoretical critique of the resistance and the colonial-world system, yet contribute to it with different instances.

Thus, I have utilised the method of the multi-local ethnography which defines an object of study that cannot be ethnographically addressed in a sole location. Instead, multi-local ethnography takes unexpected trajectories by mapping the object of study and subjugated subjects in a variety of ways and locations. Their comparative is done by conceptual unities and in different fieldwork times, by directing questions to a object study which is emerging, whose places and relationships are not already known. The object is then mobile and multi-situated (Marcus 2001). This multi-sited methodology is not a ‘traditional’ ethnography in the sense that it is not focused on a sole location nor on a sole ethnic group. Yet gradually more investigations and compilations are proposing comparative methodologies that try to analyse the same object study in diverse locations, at different times and with diverse subjects (González Alcantud 2011, Clifford 2013, Brasche 2008, Browne & McGill 2010, Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010, Arguedas 1968; Bessire & Fisher 2012).

A comparative ethnography such as this one also requires drawing on historiographic data (González Alcantud 2011) that I use on several occasions in this thesis. I have already exposed some of the literature that first influenced the design of this thesis and that explains the irruption of the Spanish, British and other colonisations in the Americas and the extension of colonisation and capitalism to other parts of the globe such as Australia. Yet although there are commonalities between different colonisations, each colonisation has been different and has employed different strategies. So to better understand the British colonisation in Australia I moved to London in July 2010. I wanted to expand the literature on Australia that was scarce in Spanish libraries and to improve my English in order to fulfill with the English requirements to enroll in an Australian university. In London I used to go to the Library of Anthropology at the British Museum to work on the literature about Australia and its British colonisation. After eighteen months in London I went back to Madrid, to start the fieldwork there while I initiated the first contacts with the Anthropology Department at Macquarie University to propose the comparison.

The fieldwork in Madrid was for thirteen months in 2012/2013. During this time I worked with the theatre company Entrecalles and the radio Las Radiantes. As I will explain in detail in chapter two, Entrecalles lacked a place to meet and rehearse but predominantly moved around the central neighbourhood of Lavapiés. Las Radiantes was located in the north-central district of Tetuán. So I first moved to live in the border of this district and about seven months later I moved to Lavapiés. To be located in these two neighbourhoods allowed me to better know the social dynamics of these areas and the cultural and political organisations located there with which Entrecalles and Las Radiantes engaged. As well, it permitted me to know firsthand the multiculturalism of these two areas and the high presence of Latin American populations in them. While Las Radiantes activities were mainly developed in the building where it was located, the nomadic characteristic of Entrecalles required an anthropology of mobility. Isabel Pellicer, Pep Vivas-Elias and Jesús Rojas (2013) propose the conjunction of *participant observation* and the *drift* as two mobile techniques to analyse contemporary cities. They base their proposal in Michel de Certeau's work (1999) to analyse the movement of people around the city, that provokes social, economic, cultural and political relationships. De Certeau's work appears in various chapters of this thesis to explain how Entrecalles—chapter two—and Koori Radio—chapter nine—develop diverse strategies to put their works in the spaces of the city. In the first case, Entrecalles is attempting to find a place to perform and rehearse due to the lack of their own space and their limited possibilities as 'immigrants' in institutional spaces of the city. In the second case, Koori Radio is attempting to put the works of Aboriginal people in non-Aboriginal spaces to give them more visibility. As Pellicer, Vivas-Elias and Rojas argue, when people become 'transumers'—i.e. they develop an ability to convert urban displacements to a life style—mobile methodology permits the ethnographer to observe social and urban phenomena while they are happening at the same time being part of them (Pellicer, Vivas-Elias & Rojas 2013:127). Yet these authors also remind ethnographers who adopt this methodology that they must not forget to maintain



emic/etic perspectives. This method has been the best way for me to observe and participate in the many multiple activities of Entrecalles—who performed and rehearsed in various parts of the city—and Koori Radio—who broadcast and promoted Aboriginal music around Sydney. I believe that it is necessary to adopt such methods if we aim to fully observe and participate in the activities of groups with such characteristics. In addition, this also has permitted me to observe in what kinds of spaces they more dominantly move as well as the social, cultural and political relationships that Entrecalles and Koori Radio establish with other collectives and subjects of the city.

In the case of Las Radiantes their mobility was more reduced since basically they developed all their activities in the same place. In both cases, in Las Radiantes and Entrecalles I was a volunteer filling gaps in their projects. As well as with Koori Radio, this volunteering permitted me to see which are they shortcomings. In chapters two and three (Entrecalles), four (Las Radiantes) and seven (Koori Radio) there are instances that explain how these organisations need to appeal to informal relationships with other subjects and a volunteer program in order to fill gaps due to the lack of enough funding (in the case of Las Radiantes and Koori Radio) or its full absence (in Entrecalles case). My main task in Las Radiantes was to record and edit the programs that they made. With Entrecalles my tasks were more varied, from taking pictures during rehearsals and performances,<sup>2</sup> helping to carry costumes and other stage pops, some administrative tasks, etc. The time I spent with them revealed their daily activities, concerns, projects, movements around the city and their relationship with other collectives.

At the time of this fieldwork in Madrid, the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Macquarie University signed a cotutelle agreement for me to enroll simultaneously at Macquarie University and to do fieldwork in Sydney. Thus I moved to Sydney in November 2013 and did fieldwork for about nine months. Then I also could expand the Australian literature. In Australia, debates revolve around whether it is accurate to use the term ‘postcolonial’ for this country; i.e., the process by which the country passed to be postcolonial has never been clearly marked. It is not solely that Elizabeth II is still the Queen of Australia and the country remains inside the Commonwealth, yet as well, as the anthropologist Jennifer Deger argues, colonialists have never properly departed, ‘transmuting from protectors to administrators’ and afterward ‘community coordinators or advisors’ (Deger 2006:66). Supporting this idea, Ian Anderson asserts that mainstream postcolonial theory in Australia has not fully focused on the fact that ‘colonial structures have never been dismantled’ (Anderson 2003:23). Rather these structures are actively reproduced within the contemporary dynamics of colonial power. As well, Marcia Langton, in a work in which she dismantles the colonial legacy in Australian film, visual arts and television (Langton 1993), suggests an *anti-colonial* perspective able to identify the way colonial representations have shaped, and misshaped the reality.

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<sup>2</sup> Most of the pictures that appear from the introduction of Madrid fieldwork to chapter three belong to these moments. Other members of Entrecalles and I were taking pictures with the same camera during their performances and rehearsals. These pictures belong to Entrecalles. I thank Entrecalles for letting me use them. I also thank Marcelo Galván for letting me use the picture of ‘Ciclo Teatro’.

A bit debate about ‘traditionalism’ and postcolonialism exist in the Australian literature. The compilation of Tess Lea, Emma Kowal and Gillian Cowlshaw (2006) criticises the way in which decolonisation has been understood in Australia through the discussion of self-determination based on traditionalism. Culturalists have used this discussion as a plea for saving or restoring the ‘authenticity’ of Aboriginal culture. As Dipesh Chakrabarty (2006)—in this compilation— suggests, the point is not to separate or authenticate Aboriginal people but to ensure that they can enjoy the rights and privileges of modern cities. This discussion on traditionalism will be at the centre of analysis in both chapters eight and nine. The analysis of the creative works of Koori Radio and Moogahlin Performing Arts in these chapters will show how this traditionalism devalues their creations as ‘urban Aboriginal people.’

The methodology that I employed in Sydney marks some differences and similarities with respect to the one of Madrid, apart from those already mentioned. The main similitude is that I adopted similar methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and I located myself in the neighbourhood where Koori Radio is located and Moogahlin Performing Arts moves around: Redfern. I have also spent time following mass media reports about the areas where the groups were located, as well as other local and national media reports related to Latin Americans (on chapter four) and Aboriginal people (on chapter six). In addition, I have watched films and TV-series which represent them in Australia and Spain, as well as attending some performances of non-Aboriginal and non-Latin American people. The fieldwork in Sydney was for nine months, yet for the reasons that I explain in the introduction to Sydney, the fieldwork with Moogahlin Performing Arts was more reduced and it did not involve volunteering. My volunteering with Koori Radio mainly consisted of editing the music they received and helping around in some events they organised. This task permitted me to deeply observe the policies of the radio station as counter-hegemonic ideas to traditionalism in the cultural industry (on chapter eight) and the way they re-articulate their identities with other racially marked ethnic groups (chapter six and eight).

One of the main differences with respect to Madrid is that in Sydney I needed approval of my conduct as a researcher by an Ethic secretariat. By this I am not trying to say that my conduct in Madrid was not ethical and that I behaved differently. I have had the same demeanours in both locations, consulting and negotiating with main representatives of each organisation about what I could research, what would be my roles in the groups and their projects, in which ways they could get a benefit from my participation and who I would interview. I also gave the subjects in the four groups the same chance to remain anonymous<sup>3</sup> and to withdraw their participation at any moment. For instance, one of the participants of Madrid, when his sister got a political position two years after the fieldwork, revised his interview and viewed what I had written in case he wanted me to omit some parts. However, some of the Ethic committee requests have marked some differences: I was asked to predict

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<sup>3</sup> All the participants in Madrid decided to maintain their real names. In the part of Sydney I have written fictitious names as established in the ethics.

in advance the directions that this research would take before getting to know the groups well, something very difficult to do when working with human beings. Consequently, this has limited the access to some information. For instance, due to the limited times to do the investigation I did not apply for working with minors. Yet I later found out that Koori Radio ran a program with young guys to induce them into broadcasting. As well I interviewed two young broadcasters over eighteen who showed some interesting differences in their answers in relation to their elders. Yet I could not corroborate such differences with other young people in the radio since they were under eighteen.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, the fieldwork in Sydney offered other differences. To work with Latin Americans in two different groups involved finding some cases of Indigenous identities and elements of Indigeneity transnationally expressed, but this identity was not always and not equally expressed by all of them. However, the element of Aboriginality in Sydney was very dominant and it is one of the main contingent signs present in their works. The work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) is very relevant in this sense since she presents methodological issues for researchers who work with Indigenous people to consider. She fosters that the method of research, the theories that inform them, the questions which are generated and the writing styles of research with Indigenous people employ a 'decolonized methodology'. It consists of including the perspectives and research works of Indigenous scholars and people (it does not mean rejecting all the work that comes from the West) (Smith 2008:39). This is an idea however that it has been very present during my whole research. I have included a varied literature that involves voices of Latin Americans in the Americas, Latin Americans in Spain, Spanish, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians as well as others such as Africans. As well, I have utilised other sources that expressed the voices of Aboriginal people and Latin Americans and corroborated those of my informants, such as web pages, blogs, documentaries and videos, which have been of extraordinary significance to better understand their social dynamics.

This leads me to introduce various points here; firstly, to explain similar perspectives coming from the Spanish academia by the proposal of Liliana Suárez Navaz to avoid a 'nationalistic methodology' which tends to exclude and undermine transformer practices of the most vulnerable sectors of society (Suárez Navaz 2007; see also Massó Guijarro 2013). Secondly, to point out that the aim of this research is to highlight the resistance of Aboriginal people and Latin Americans in spite of the obstacles they can encounter to raise their voices and develop their projects. Lastly to affirm, as Teun Adrianus van Dijk asserts in his analysis of racism (2005), that when researching disadvantaged people it is a good idea to define power abuse in terms of the perspective of its victims or survivors rather in the terms of those who engage in such abuse. As he states, many members of dominant groups have a hard time seeing inequities as 'racism' or 'sexism' in everyday life or do not accept naming them as such (van Dijk 2005:4). Similarly Encarnación Guitérrez asserts that a decolonial ethics of responsibility involves giving preference to the voices of the 'peoples on the periphery' (Guitérrez 2010:167). I agree with these perspectives. It seems to me that if for instance one

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<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of the boundaries of the research ethics in Australia see Gillian Cowlshaw (2014, 2013).

wants to know about forms of sexist violence, I would first have to ask the victims and put their voices in the centre of analysis —although to hear the abuser’s opinion is useful too to unmask its causes. In the same line, I designed this thesis with the idea to spend much of the research time looking at the voices and opinions of the subjects of study to visibilise them as much as I could. What it has also involved is reading the literature that the actual participants recommended me to read. These voices should not be understood as unitary. Subjectivities, feelings and opinions of my informants are various and I have tried to reflect this variety as well as their social worlds during the writing of this thesis, as much as the length of a comparative methodology like this permits.

Lastly, writing of this thesis has been done during about five months in Sydney and about a year in my hometown—Mérida— placing my self away from both fieldworks. Since I started the investigation I have heard voices from anthropologists in Madrid suggesting a development in anthropology as a discipline. Influenced by the political actions that came to light in Spain from 2011 in the *Indignados* political and social movement that joined other international movements such as the Arab Spring, anthropologists who were involved in this movement were claiming a shift towards what they call ‘Radical Anthropology’. They assert anthropologists should take a political attitude and commitment in their works. Other Ph.D candidates have been claiming in their theses a methodology of ‘Activist Anthropology’ which situates anthropologists as active participants in the activism of group studies. In the face of the last socio-cultural and political changes occurring in many societies around the globe, these are some challenges for anthropology as a discipline that studies social problems and contributes to their solution. I am not keen to label myself or my work with any word, since this would create expectations that I might not be able to fulfill. However, my attempt has been to adopt a commitment to the subjects who have participated in this thesis —a commitment that has been political on many occasions—and, as I have said before, to give priority to their voices and make visible their resistance through their works.

Everything I have described in here has offered interesting data which tells about cultural resistance that shifts the articulation of complex versions of political and cultural identities. The creative works of the four case studies and power relationships in both Sydney and Madrid are susceptible to being compared in the following conceptual analysis. Following the comparative model of Lucas Bessire and Daniel Fisher in their analysis of radios in various parts of the world (Bessire & Fisher 2012), the comparison is presented in six axes.

### *Axis I: Theatre, radio and identities*

Identity constructions through processes of cultural and political articulation of subjectivities and shared experiences are central from chapter two to nine. Subjectivities and shared experiences between groups that have been marginalised in the national political economy link the potential of theatre and

radio to cultural agency and resistance. The chances that radio and theatre offer groups of people for political identities and to look for social changes are relevant here. Frantz Fanon worked on building a new Black identity and signaled elements such as the radio for decolonisation. Elements such as this, he observed, have historically been utilised by dominant national voices and as such they can be decolonised by oppressed voices who re-build their identities (Fanon 2008). Similarly, Ellen Gainor in a compilation about theatre in imperial societies, signals that theatre has historically been selected for the depiction of imperial and colonial concerns, utilised as the disseminator of a dominant ideology, yet as such it is both a vehicle for the promotion of, as well as the revolt of, the colonized against empire (Gainor 1995). The daily dynamics in which these theatre and radio elements foster identity articulation and its scope depends on the social, political and economic characteristics in which they develop. As Stuart Hall explains, articulation is a cyborg, a living 'growing' body that continuously develops through time that can become a collective 'voice'. Yet he also signals that we should ask how and why ideological elements come under certain conditions to cohere together within a discourse and how and why they do not become articulated in others (Hall 1986).

These questions are addressed in chapters two, five, six and eight. In chapter two I trace the routes that the theatre company Entrecalles creates around Madrid to find spaces of the city to perform which are not conventional theatres. This results from their limited chances to perform in institutional theatres as 'immigrants' and the stereotyped, racialised and sexualised roles they play in the film industry. In their movements around the city they meet other collectives and subjects who share similar experiences. Then, in chapter two I describe how this company which initially identifies as 'Latin American' suffers a social transformation joining other actors of African backgrounds. I describe how, in their alliances with these people they re-articulate their identity under the contingent sign of 'immigrant' — understood as those who are racially and nationally inferiorised. Thus, I show in chapter three how new actors who join Entrecalles project their subjectivities and other identities into one of the plays of the company.

In chapter five I describe how Latin American women cohere together with Spanish women into a shared feminist identity under the contingent signs of 'gender' and 'sisterhood'. In chapter four I explain that Latin American women approach Las Radiantes in an attempt to look for a space to project their voices and feelings. Through the analysis of a film, a creative work and some radio programs promoted in Las Radiantes, I trace the process of subjectification by which these women incorporate their voices in the radio. In addition, I delve into how some of them include elements of Indigeneity in this shared feminist identity. I argue that rigid forms of understanding feminism can be problematic if ethnic, class and other differences are not attended to. Instead, I point to how different forms of resistance responding to those differences show diverse ways of being feminist.

In chapters six and eight I explain the processes by which Aboriginality comes to be articulated with Blackness and Indigeneity in Koori Radio. By tracing the history of political activism in the area

where Koori Radio is located, Redfern, I observe how Aboriginal people in Sydney and more specifically in this area, develop cultural projects of Aboriginal resistance in conjunction with Black Power. Thus, I explain that Blackness has become a powerful transnational element that has helped to strengthen Aboriginal struggles. Yet while the articulation of Aboriginality and Blackness has been built through the contingent sign of 'Black', I emphasise that this has not prevented the continuity of a strong Aboriginal identity and the re-articulation with Indigeneity. By analysing the policies of Koori Radio to promote and provide room for Indigenous and Black musicians from overseas and the way they have provided room from its origins for these people to express themselves through the radio, I analyse how the Black and Indigenous identities and subjectivities are incorporated in their works. Moreover, in chapters eight and nine I show that the way that Koori Radio has used to contest traditionalist representations of Aboriginal people in cultural industries by incorporating diverse selves and subjectivities into Aboriginality and Indigeneity.

In these chapters subjectivities are inseparable from political identities and their creative creations that are the motor of resistance. What these three instances can contribute to the theory of articulation is that even when subjects share similar experiences that in specific circumstances cohere together, they need continued re-articulations based on new circumstances, new subjects and changes of subjectivities. When identities are not fixed and nor are subjectivities, political identities need continued readjustments for their continuity or development and adaptation to new circumstances. The contingent sign of 'Latin American' transmutes at times in Entrecalles to the one of 'immigrant'; the one of 'feminist' needs continued re-articulations to include women of diverse backgrounds, social classes and other differences who join Las Radiantes; the one of 'Aboriginal' has been re-articulated in Koori Radio along with the history of other transnational movements and people. These instances together are illustrating distinct ways in which theatre and radio can contribute to re-articulate subjectivities and overcome differences between subjects in a shared project. Moreover, with the incorporation of diverse subjects and subjectivities into their projects they contribute to strengthening their struggles and the arguments that sustain their struggles.

## *Axis II: Theatre, radio and the state*

The state is present in various parts of this thesis, yet explicitly it is placed in the centre of the analysis in chapters two and seven. Whereas I have previously explained how political identities re-articulate in specific circumstances, the role of the state and its governing over society through a series of apparatuses and rules is discussed in these chapters as determinant in the daily activities of Entrecalles and Koori Radio. Philipp Corrigan and Derek Sayer (2007) argue that the modern English state is the result of a long process of control by dominant classes that transformed not only political rules but also cultural ones. They emphasise the articulation between the state and the cultural revolution as two processes closely related that determine social relationships about class, gender and 'race'. From here,

we can observe how the activities of the state—including cultural ones— more or less coercively foster some cultural and national identities while suppress others. Michel Foucault's argument on governmentality (1991) refers to organised state practices by rationalities, mentalities and techniques, through which the population is governed. Thus, governmentality is the 'art of government' by which states create strategies and techniques to produce the population best suited to fulfill government policies. The effect of this 'art of governing' on the population is its capacity to extend into citizens through 'self-governing'. Charles Hale (2002) joins these analyses of governmentality and cultural revolution of the state to identify concessions and prohibitions of multicultural neoliberal societies. He understands that multiculturalism that is 'celebrated' in neoliberal discourses is a strategy to govern that is constituted in a political space where all who live there are disciplined. Yet he stresses the possibilities for 'overrunning the limits' (2002:497).

In chapter seven I explain that some Koori Radio's internal policies are intrinsically related to forms of government extension that reproduce the moral self of the dominant society. These policies reproduce conducts established by a dominant 'White' moral order for Australian citizens which limit some expressions and activities such as swearing. What is more important in this form of controlled behaviour is that it is decrying some transnational musical expressions of the Black identity. The role of the radio station, which is to promote the diversity of voices and cultural expressions of Aboriginal, Black and Indigenous people comes limited by the need for Koori Radio to reproduce state social rules in order to maintain its licence. So, some music expressions of Blackness that have become transnational and powerful symbols of Blackness are incompatible with these policies for the expression of such swearing. As well, to fill gaps and solve financial shortcomings, the radio station is faced with the need to broadcast government advertisements that also extend standardised national behaviours for Aboriginal people. 'Moral behaviours' are embraced by some people at the radio while rejected by others. Yet overall chapter seven shows how government policies 'enter' into the radio through diverse strategies in their daily practices and broadcasts. And that, in spite of this, Koori Radio also develops some informal strategies to maintain its objectives to promote Aboriginal, Black and Indigenous music at the same time that it fulfills the discipline.

In chapter two I detail how the state, in its cultural revolution (Corrigan & Sayer 2007; Lagos & Calla 2007) fosters some cultural nationalised Spanish expressions to the detriment of the non-nationalised. This affects Entrecalles as a theatre company due to their lack of Spanish nationalisation as a company. Spanish institutions, in the building of a 'national culture' provide budgets for theatre productions and venues. In parallel, they establish a series of preconditions that intrinsically foster 'nationalised' production in detriment to those which lack a juridical national acknowledgement. Then I describe how Entrecalles 'flees from' institutional spaces in order to be able to perform, developing a series of strategies and informal relationships with other collectives in spaces of the city where these institutional rules are not dominant. This detachment from the state and its norms is what permits Entrecalles to keep operating as a theatre company in Spain. However, I argue that Entrecalles still leaves place for government when engaging in some spaces that receive institutional support. Yet this

approach occur in those spaces of the city where the cultural norms of the state are not active. This results in the majority of spaces where Entrecalles performs being not the conventional venues for performances but those where the cultural revolution of the state is not the dominant norm.

Judith Butler and Gayatri C. Spivak engage in a dialogue about the relationship of nation-states with citizens and signal that state power instrumentalises the criteria of citizenship to produce and paralyse a population. They argue that this can happen through complex modes of governmentality and modes of instrumentality that are not necessarily initiated or sustained by a sovereign subject (Butler & Spivak 2007:40). The cases of Koori Radio in chapter seven and Entrecalles in chapter two provide instances that show that the forms that the state adopts to maintain a national cultural revolution and govern over the population are multiple and varied. Even more, due to the lack of a direct sovereign figure that sustains it, this power relation can go unnoticed. The most complex aspect of this situation is that state practices, policies, norms and rules that are present in the society in a non-sovereign form, in its attempt to promote specific nationalised cultural practices and nationalised standard behaviours, can provoke other forms of cultural production to remaining disadvantaged. Furthermore, these cases also show that the relationships of minority groups with the state are complex, at times conflictive, at other embraced. Yet also, these instances contribute to show that the qualities of theatre and radio may allow them to maintain their objectives while to a lesser or greater extent sustaining formal relationships with the state and informal relationships with other collectives; i.e. that formality and informality are not incompatible. As James Clifford explains, we should not assume that formal engagement with institutions erases the political agenda or disables some sort of sovereignty. And the opposite, that to criticise institutional dependency presumes a possible independence (Clifford 2013:306). Surely, it is more realistic to acknowledge the room of maneuver that exists in these formal relations with the state and its bureaucratic apparatuses and signal, as Corrigan and Sayer explain, that ‘to conform does not always involve to agree’ (Corrigan & Sayer 2001:81).

### *Axis III: Theatre, radio and the spaces of the city*

The manner in which radio and theatre help to link different spaces of the city through cultural activities and their broadcasts is crucial for the way that urban spaces of the city can also influence our subjectivities that contribute to identities. The anthropologist Susan Lobo in her study of urban Indigenous people states that ‘urban doesn’t determine self-identity, yet the urban area and the urban experiences are contexts that contribute to define identities’ (Lobo 2001:73). She asserts that urban Indigenous people are not situated in an immutable, bounded territory, but rather exist within a fluidly refined region with niches of resources and boundaries that respond to needs and activities (2001:76). The feminist and geographer Doreen Massey shows how our subjectivities are influenced by experiences such as the degree to which we can move about the streets, restrictions or spatial organisations. This spatial organisation can be gendered, racial and class influenced, and it can lead



people to a spatial and social reorganisation of urban life, such that, the identities of peoples can be also made in relation to places. Yet as she argues, we should not understand the identification of a single place with communities, since communities can exist without being in the same place through networks of friends or alike with shared ethnic or political interests. Moreover, communities in the sense of coherent social groups are quite rare, existing in more than a single sense of place (Massey 2001:153). Various chapters examine how the theatre and mediated activities of the groups in this thesis offer pathways to group individuals and communities located in diverse spaces of the city. Specifically, chapters two and nine show how Koori Radio and Entrecalles create fluid routes and break symbolic boundaries through theatre and music performance, as well as their broadcasts.

The ethnographic instances described here constitute examples of these groups activities connecting with spaces of the city, which is more evident in the mentioned chapters. In chapter six I expose the symbolism of Redfern, the area where Koori Radio is located, as a site of urban Aboriginality that is recognised as such by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Multiple are the activities that Aboriginal organisations such as Koori Radio develop there. The symbolism marks the survival of Aboriginal people in settled Australia, that at the same time evokes the political and cultural struggles that were specially significant in the 1970-80s. Older Aboriginal radio and theatre groups from Redfern contributed by their activities to the symbol of Aboriginal survival and the work of organisations such as Koori Radio and Moogahlin Performing Arts continue with such symbolism. Yet as well, radio practices create new spaces of imagination from which to engage other urban spaces. Given that Koori Radio's objective is to give a voice to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on its airwaves, I explain in chapter nine how they move to other parts of the city to broadcast activities that happen in other areas that are also symbols of Aboriginality. And importantly, how through diverse activities that the radio organises, such as concerts and festivals, they attract Aboriginal people from diverse parts of Sydney and New South Wales to other parts. This helps to create unity, reinforce group identities and highlight Aboriginal presence and survival in the urban context of Sydney.

Previously I explained the act of 'rebellion' by Entrecalles to flee from institutional spaces. Chapter two also shows how this act of 'rebellion' that involves developing their activities (performances and rehearsals) in non-institutional spaces contributes to define its political identity. Entrecalles members look for other spaces of the city where collectives that share their political attitude and interest in cultural creations exist. I explain how performances help to link various parts of the city through the concept of *barrio* —neighbourhood— in two senses: 1) As a political dimension broadened by a shared political attitude of collectives and individuals who move around the main area of action of Entrecalles (*Lavapiés barrio*) who present resistance to forms of power through diverse cultural and political actions. 2) As a trans-territorial dimension by which Entrecalles moves to other parts of Madrid and other locations to develop activities. The latter is possible by the networks created during

their performances where they meet other people and collectives who facilitate finding other spaces of the city to perform. Although these experiences do not create an identity, they do contribute to define the shared political identity in Entrecalles by which various subjects cohere together to contest their marginalisation from institutional spaces and as I will further explain in axes five and six, in the mass cultural Spanish industry.

As said before, in various moments of this thesis I follow Michel de Certeau's analysis to observe daily activities that Aboriginal people and Latin Americans develop around cities (1999) to signal how radio and theatre practices permit them to promote their creations; and with their movement, to create routes that dismantle the social order. The chapters reveal how theatre and radio expand and make visible their creations. This also includes to making visible Latin Americans as 'postcolonial immigrants' in the former metropolis and to dismantle the social order of conventional theatre venues. Through their performances, there are multiple concerns that Entrecalles is presenting to the audience. One of the most significant is that they are proving their ability to develop their own projects and their artistic potential in various spaces of the city in spite of marginalisation and stereotyping in others. In the Koori Radio case, it includes the visibility of Indigenous people in urban settled Sydney, in areas that are symbolically recognised as 'Aboriginal' yet also in other spaces not recognised as such. It is specially significant for the external attributes that consider Aboriginal people in Sydney as 'non-real' and their marginalisation as 'not-authentic enough' in the art industry. With the exposition of their works in various parts of the city they are showing their ability and artistic potential to develop a wide range of creative works. Finally, these dynamics and movement suggest that subjectivities can be also influenced by social, political and cultural relationships in the spaces of the city, that our movements around a city also provide experiences that give form to identity.

#### *Axis IV: Theatre, radio and the transnational*

The transnational is present in chapters three, five and six in very distinct ways but they are similarly placed to show how theatre and radio offer opportunities to include in their practices a global variety of transnational identifications and senses of local, national and diasporic belonging, as well as identification with transnational cultural and political movements. In this research, attending to radio and theatre practices has called attention numerous times beyond the local and the national to the transnational. Liliana Suárez Navaz uses in various works (Suárez Navaz 2005a; Suárez Navaz, Maciá Pareja & Moreno García 2007; Suárez Navaz 2010; Suárez Navaz 2007), a transnational perspective to 'abandon' the nationalistic methodology mentioned before and its premise that conceptualises a national or local space as the content of identity and is related to a sole territory (Suárez Navaz 2007). Lucas Bessire and Daniel Fisher (Bessire & Fisher 2012) explain how radio can help to reorganise various identifications and belonging to the local, the nation and diasporic communities; and as well, it can facilitate access to a transnational set of signs and symbols that are always locally coproduced.

The instances in chapters three, five and six follow similar ideas to these authors. In chapter three I offer various instances in which the transnational appears in the feelings of the company actors, concretely in the figure of the Entrecalles founder, Carlos, who makes references to his country of birth, Peru, and his movement around Mexico and Spain. He offers information that explains how the experiences that he has had in these places have been articulated in his personal identity, being specially significative when he positions himself as Indigenous Quechua in Mexico and Latino in Spain. As well, he explains how the postcolonial relationship between Spain and Latin America has been reflected in the writing script of one of Entrecalles plays, not only because he is located in Spain but also because this relationships is also evident in Peru. This chapter also shows Latin American actors working in performances about Indigenous or pre-Colombus tales for Latin American kids living in Madrid to know 'their culture'. In these instances, Indigenous elements are a vehicle for connecting different geographies and experiences. In addition, I explain in chapter three the efforts on the part of Latin American actors in Madrid to foster transnational contacts with Latin American artists in Latin American countries for them to expose their works in Spain.

In chapter five, the transnational appears also through Indigeneity. Various Latin American members of Las Radiantes radio profess Indigenous identity. The radio organises a series of programs that talk about the original countries of the participants in the radio and the women's struggles in those countries. On various occasions these women claim to look at the particularities of Indigenous women in the struggles of women in their countries. The transnational is indispensable to understand how Indigeneity is maintained by these women in Spain since that Indigeneity is usually associated with a land belonging, in their cases to Latin American countries. Thus, in chapter five it is observed how the Indigenous can be transnationally extrapolated to other terrains. Furthermore, some of these women also compare their feelings and experiences in Latin American countries as Indigenous people with those in Spain as 'immigrants', manifesting a clear articulation of the local, national and transnational in their subjectivities and identities.

In chapter six I explore transnationalism from a different angle. I explore how the radio practices have permitted articulating Aboriginal struggles with Black Power. This transnational relationship is fundamental to understand the cultural and political movements that have occurred in Redfern and has made this area such an important focus of the transnationalisation of 'Black Power'. The relationships between Aboriginal people and Afro-descendant soldiers from the U.S. who arrived in Sydney in the 1970s gave way to think Aboriginality in terms of Blackness. Through radio, theatre and other cultural elements, Aboriginal people in Redfern have made use of intense transnational symbols and built transborder alliances that reinforce their struggles as 'Black' people. As well, in chapters six, eight and

nine I suggest that this transnational articulation has been re-articulated with Indigeneity, by their contact with Indigenous peoples from overseas who get involved in the radio. Transnational Indigenous movements help also Aboriginal people in Koori Radio to reinforce their claims as Indigenous people of Australia. The element of Indigeneity is specially relevant for the exposition of Aboriginal creations. Contrary to traditionalistic conceptions of Indigeneity attached to a land and the continuity of 'traditional' practices, transnational Indigeneity helps to reinforce Aboriginal urban people's claims against traditionalism.

A transnational perspective introduces a more complex analysis than ethnographies focused on local relationships and identities. In Entrecalles and Las Radiantes cases, some of the transnational analysis refers to feelings and experiences that occurred in a context which is not the one in which this research developed. In other cases, the transnational is accessed through performances and international meetings that permit the movement of people from one side to another. In the case of the performances about Indigenous tales for Latin American children, the performances become a vehicle to maintain a transnational connection with their origins. In the case of Koori Radio, the transnational is presented as a force to reinforce their struggles and create alliances, that in turn helps to rethink transnational symbols with a local use. What these instances have in common is that they are reflecting how theatre and radio practices permit 'travel' between the local, the national and the transnational. Yet also that the transnational linked to their practices can help to situate Indigeneity traditionalist parameters further away. To adopt this perspective makes the research more complex, but it is necessary if we are fully to understand their social dynamics, and the diverse forms in which the transnational can affect our identities.

#### *Axis V: Theatre, radio, language and music*

The analysis of the cultural productions developed inside the radios and the theatre companies foregrounds issues about language and music. Language and music appear in diverse chapters, but acquire special relevance in chapters three and eight. At times language and music come interconnected in some of these practices, in others they act separately. Performative and radio practices are significant for making visible linguistic and musical forms that are stigmatised or ignored in the media and cultural industries. Gloria Anzaldúa in her regarded work about the 'new Mestiza' (1999) speaks strongly as a Chichana about her feelings of being stuck between two imperialisms (Spanish and the U.S.) for neither of which is she 'authentic enough'. She had only a native tongue and did not speak Spanish or English at the established standards. Anzaldúa coined the term 'linguistic terrorism' to address the issue of critics towards people's accents and 'improper' uses of languages. She considers that these critics are an attack on individuals and create a linguistic

hierarchy. According to Anzaldúa, the way a person speaks demonstrates who they are and how the linguistic interlaces with their identities. So that, she proposes to accept and value all the accents and linguistic varieties. This proposal is very pertinent for this thesis in which both Aboriginal people in settled Sydney and Latin Americans in Madrid who use English and Spanish as first language and in a different manner to the standard ones.

Issues about linguistic expressions intertwine with musical ones in the sense that music can also project identity and be presented in an interconnected manner in performances and and radio. *Entrecalles* (chapter three) employs linguistic varieties and music expressions as processes of subjectification in their plays. Actors of the company adopt in one of the company plays the accents and slangs of the Spanish from their respective countries. This is very significant because of the logics in which the mass Spanish film industry usually operates. Latin American actors, when their physical characteristics do not fit some of the 'Latin American' prototype, have to 'correct' their accents and expressions in order to be able to access 'non-Latinos' roles. So, the play of *Entrecalles* is placing in focus a wide and rich variety of linguistic expressions in Spanish that are so scarce in Spanish films, TV-series and TV in general. In addition, *Entrecalles* employs varied musical Latin American styles in the play that link to the linguistic 'demonstrations'.

In chapter eight and nine I present how Koori Radio employs a series of linguistic terms such as 'deadly' and 'mob' to assert Aboriginality. In the face of external accusations of 'inauthentic Aboriginality' regarding Aboriginal people and artists in the Sydney area, they employ a series of linguistic markers of Aboriginal expressions in English. These expressions are used to name many of the radio shows, and are used during the broadcasts and in daily conversations. As well, these linguistic expressions and some Aboriginal languages are registered in the songs of bands that record their music at the radio station or are promoted in it. At the same time, these musical expressions that are exposed in a wide range of genders, work to reflect how radio allows making visible vocal arguments against the traditionalism that pigeonholes Aboriginal urban people as 'inauthentic'. Koori Radio promotes any kind of Aboriginal music, not only the one which is considered 'traditional' in the market. So both, linguistic and music expressions provide important information for exploring the entanglements of the cultural industry in Australia and its scant attention to Aboriginal urban creations.

Language and music expressions are significant because of the power of the vocal that can put into the centre of political attention issues about ways in which ethnic groups are authenticated or despised as 'inauthentic'. What these two cases are showing is the ability of radio and theatre to organise and disseminate the resistance that is also linguistic and musical. Music and linguistic expressions are also identity practices that, in the case of Koori Radio consist of the use of words that act as codes between Aboriginal people in Australia, from broadcasters to listeners. In the case of *Entrecalles* it is an identity manifestation of the varieties of Spanish, not only in the relationship of Latin America to Spain but also inside the Latin American countries. Each actor uses distinct linguistic expressions and as such they are contesting the extended use of standardised Spanish in the media with a wide range of

linguistic alternatives. What these two distinct cases are showing is that linguistic and music as vocal expressions, are also important in the construction and performance of the identities of peoples who have been disposed of their native tongue. To ignore the variety of styles in the cultural and media industries is, as Anzaldúa sustains, to create hierarchies.

### *Axis VI: Theatre and body*

The analysis of the cultural economy in Sydney and Madrid is fundamental to this thesis and on many occasions foregrounds examining issues of the body. The analysis of the representations and stereotypes of Aboriginal and Latin American peoples in Australian and Spanish cultural industries allows us to understand the communality between them. Aboriginal and Latin American actors are protesting against the traditionalism and dominant stereotypes represented through corporeal images in the mass media. For decades, various authors have been insisting on noticing the diverse ways in which racism, sexism, classism and colonialism (Ali 2004, hooks 2015, Vidal Claramonte 2002, Méndez 2004, Konkobo 2010) reinvent themselves in commodified forms through diverse corporeal and cultural discourses of traditionalism, culturalism or neo-primitivism. In this regard, Lourdes Méndez criticises postmodernist perspectives such as those by Marcus and Myers (Marcus & Myers 1995) for ignoring the material and ideological effects of colonialism and postcolonialism and the mythologising of art. It is naïve, she argues, to expect that colonial inequalities are going to be overcome by, for instance, the exhibition of Occidental and non-Occidental artists together in art exhibitions (Méndez Pérez 2006:86). This position, she continues, is ignoring that, in any art sphere, those who act as referees are Eurocentric and androcentric. That position, I argue, will not completely explain why Latin Americans in Madrid see their chances to perform in films as conditioned by the existence of roles that reproduce the 'Indian in the Americas' or the 'poor Latin American immigrant' in Spain. Similarly, it would not explain the emphasis on the 'savage' and 'real' Indigenous in the representation of Aboriginal people in the Australian cultural industry. Moreover, it does not explain what occurs with those 'bodies' that are seen to be too phenotypical and culturally distant to represent the 'authentic indigenous'. Rather, as Méndez argues, it is necessary to see how the images about Others have been created and legitimated over 'cultural bodies' in Occidentalised societies through art (Méndez 2004:20).

Although the issues of traditionalism and pejorative images appear in diverse instances in this thesis, they acquire a significant relevance in the analysis of 'the cultural' and 'racial' bodies of Aboriginal and Latin American actors. Chapters two, three, eight and nine deal with the issues of representation. In chapters two and eight I expose the logics that operate in cultural Spanish and Australian industries through films and other visual arts that objectivise bodies in relation to racial, cultural and sexual parameters. In chapters three and nine I detail the insistence of the theatre companies to foster counter-narratives that amplify the type of stories that subject the 'cultural bodies'. The time I spent with the

Entrecalles theatre company during their rehearsals has allowed a unique opportunity to observe daily activities and body exercises that break with social habitus and permit building their roles through the body. In addition, I have witnessed the processes of personification of the roles by the actors through the subjectification of their feelings and experiences in the narratives and roles. These processes are very significant for the opportunity that their rehearsals and performances offer to break with dominant 'Latinos prototypes' in the industry. In the formal and informal interviews with the Moogahlin Performing Arts theatre company I also heard similar complaints from the side of Aboriginal actors in relation to the dominance of 'middle-class men' perspectives in the film and performance Australian industries. Aboriginal voices in Australia are claiming a shift away from the dominant narratives about Aboriginal people based on culturalist representations that operate through the binaries of 'urban/remote', 'traditional/contemporary' and 'authentic/inauthentic' Aboriginal culture and bodies. As Andrew Lattas argues, Aboriginal people are creating new shared embodied spaces which can incorporate those people who 'do not look Aboriginal'. This includes a discourse that outwits all bids to divide them into the authentic and inauthentic, or traditional versus urban (Nyoongah et al. 1992:162).

These cases show how the visual arts are reproducing inequalities based on corporeal and cultural differences. Yet as well, they are reproducing old hierarchies that colonialisms provoked in Aboriginal Australians and Latin Americans by signaling phenotypical and cultural differences between themselves based the miscegenation of British and Spanish with Indigenous peoples. A commonality between Aboriginal and Latin American actors in respect to cultural industries is that those actors whose bodies inhabit a 'twilight one' (hook 2015; Ali 2004) might get doubly alienated as not-black enough to play Indigenous roles and still culturally too distant to play White Australians and Spanish roles. What we will see in chapters two, three, eight and nine is that the racialised and sexualised bodies —signaled through phenotypes— and the cultural bodies—signaled with markers such as linguistic and aesthetic— still act as differentiators in the cultural economy in Spain and Australia. As Suki Ali argues, the importance of bodies to the understanding of "race," is how the society learns the codes that have imposed racialized meanings upon bodies and style, and the relationship between terminology and visual codes. Yet if we are to understand how ethnicities and cultures are racialised we have to consider the way in which they become visualised, not only as bodies but also within broader social contexts of cultural expression (Ali 2004:83). And importantly, we should try to answer the question of who is raced by whom.

The concept of transculturation will be the one which permits dismantling this logic in this thesis. This concept of Fernando Ortiz (1983) that explains the cultural transits occurring in any culture in contact with other cultures, it is in line with the theory of the articulation argument that understands identities

as incomplete. Thus, transculturation is a concept able to dismantle the traditionalism and culturalist perspectives. From the concept of transculturation also I can explain the multi-faceted abilities of Aboriginal and Latin American people to develop a wide spectrum of cultural practices by placing their bodies and cultural practices in the most varied manners. From the analysis of their practices, we will see their responses to the dominant corporeal images of 'Latinos' and 'Aboriginal' prototypes.

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The axes presented here could have been organised in different ways, since as we will see some of these discussions repeat in other chapters and are needed to be explained on repeated occasions. The following chapters will present the chronological order of the fieldworks, starting with Madrid fieldwork to later move to Sydney. These ethnographies seek to encourage conversations about the relationship between theatre, radio and socio-political and economic contexts as well as the politics of representation. Yet overall, theatre and radio operate as elements to organise cultural resistance and political agency. The four case studies that follow will open various questions about the ways that radio and theatre practices of minority groups are addressing about institutional, political economies and social relationships as much as about the communication and articulation of identities.



## Part I: In Madrid



A squat space by neighbours in Madrid

The big tent called ‘Acampada Sol’ that was initiated by the *Indignados* movement on the 15th of May 2011 marked an important moment in the history of Spain. A group of people decided to camp in the centre area of Madrid —Sol— and a series of protests in other parts of Spain occurred simultaneously. Their protests were aimed against the domain of banks and corporations, in support of democracy with more citizen participation and bigger division of powers in order to improve the democratic system. ‘Democracia Real Ya!’—‘*Real Democracy Now!*’— was one of their main banners. I believe that one of the most interesting and innovative aspects of this movement is that it was able to gather diverse voices and peoples of different backgrounds and interests. It was not just a movement of men, women, those affected by banks and mortgage, feminists, ‘immigrants’, LGTB, miners, lower classes, middle classes, health workers, students, anti-capitalists, anti-racists collectives, Spanish, Latin Americans, Africans,..., but a sum of all of them that acted coordinately or at different times but under the same

political atmosphere. When I arrived in Madrid in July 2012 this big tent has been evicted from the Sol area but manifestations, strikes and political actions continued. The country remained in an economic recession and unemployment rates were rising. While I initiated the search for study groups and during the rest of the time I was in Madrid, I participated in some of these manifestations and strikes many of which gathered a series of artistic performances. People who participated in these manifestations were dressed or carrying some object like dummies that symbolised the protest. As well, music groups and performers joined this art-activism. At the same time, some minority media were advocating an 'ethical journalism' and protesting against some mass media directives.

It was through the internet that I found out about Entrecalles and Las Radiantes. Both groups announced there their activities and that is how I contacted them. Thirteen months of fieldwork with the theatre company Entrecalles took place, from September 2012 to October 2013. This time of fieldwork took me to different parts of the city of Madrid and outside where Entrecalles moved around. I initiated fieldwork with Las Radiantes in November 2012 until also October 2013. As I said in the first chapter I was living approximately half the time of the fieldwork in each of the areas where each group was located or moving around in: Tetuán and Lavapiés. The movement around the city, the participation in these political actions and to be living in two different areas permitted me to observe the political and cultural activism that was taking place in the city. Although Las Radiantes and Entrecalles were not directly implicated in these actions, many of their members had been active subjects in these protests. Furthermore, as we are going to see, this context, that included state cuts to many social spheres—including cultural ones—has been instrumental in the work of these groups and their relationship and alliances with other collectives. Many of these alliances have occurred in squats of the city of Madrid such as that in the picture above.

## Chapter Two: Entrecalles using the *barrio*. De-institutionalisation and de-colonisation of performative spaces

### 1. Making use of the *barrio* of Lavapiés

I first contacted Entrecalles after seeing an old advertisement for one of their performances at La Tabacalera, a squat located in a *barrio* —neighbourhood— of Madrid: Lavapiés. The group was promoted as a *Latin American theatre* and announced a performance for two days only. Since the dates were already past, I emailed the theatre company to ask about future events. Its director, Carlos Alcalde, answered straight away, followed by many questions about who I was and what I wanted from them. The fact that I was an anthropology student sounded good to him, since they had been looking for an anthropologist or historian to join the group. So, we arranged a meeting in the place he proposed: the old Film Library of Madrid, situated close to the Lavapiés area. That day we talked about their projects and their many and diverse difficulties as a small, non-funded theatre company, problems such where to find a place to rehearse and venues to perform. He wanted me to know the company was working on two plays, but they were thinking about stopping the one I saw in the advert since one of their actors was seriously ill. So they were putting most of their energy into the newest play. Already from this first meeting, I could see the company was putting all its effort into finding a place to rehearse and venues to perform in the *barrio* —neighbourhood— of Lavapiés; metaphorically understanding this *barrio*, as I will further explain, in a multi-sited or trans-local manner.

There were other similar meetings between just us two, until Carlos decided to introduce me to the rest of the group. I believe Carlos was trying to see my intentions, my research project and to decide whether I could play the role of the ‘anthropologist’ they were looking for. The company was in the process of re-writing the script for their newest play, which is full of historical references to Spain and old civilisations. After about three weeks of meetings and talks I was granted this role and joined Entrecalles. Just before meeting the actors of the company I asked Carlos if they were used to the presence of non-actors :

We are used to seeing people who come to help and leave. I’m a lucky person, because I always meet people like you. Before, we had a guy from Mexico, Gonzalo, who was also one of our actors and helped a lot on the first writing of the script. Now we have another student, a fashion-design student, who contacted us because she wanted to do our clothing design; for the customs. She’s from Galicia, and she’s studying in Madrid. And the rest of people who join us are those we meet during our performances, in places like La Tabacalera and alike; or because of the advertisements I put on internet. For example, in La Tabacalera there is an African filmmaker that I know and he is helping a lot. And Miguel, a Chilean filmmaker who saw one advertisement I put on internet,... He replied and offered himself to help in recording a video we needed. And this is great, because we don’t have money to pay people. They do it altruistically or because it is good for their studies.

The first time I met the actors was after a performance in the neighbourhood association in Orcasitas, a suburb of Madrid. On this occasion, only the actors who performed were there. They were: Marcelo, of Mexican background who re-joined the company after not participating for a long time, and replaced Gonzalo, who had left Spain after frustrated attempts to renew his visa. Maria, another Mexican actress who a few weeks later would also go back to Mexico due to not being very successful in her attempt to work in the performance industry in Spain. And the rest of the actors were Juliana, of Argentinean background, Ben, of Moroccan background and Jose, of Spanish background. After this performance in Orcasitas I would see other actors leaving and new ones arriving to replace them.

There have been many people who have formed part of the company. Carlos assured me that this is ‘normal’ in a theatre company, especially considering that Entrecalles is a non-funded, small company that also has moved around different locations. Carlos does not remember the exact date Entrecalles was born, but points at about 1995 in Mexico. He first was working as, and studied to be, an actor in Lima, his place of birth. From Perú he moved to Nicaragua and Mexico where he was working as an actor and started to work as director assistant. In Mexico he met a Spanish theatre director, who offered him a job in Spain. So in 2000 he moved to Madrid where he has continued with Entrecalles projects as both director and actor; at the same time he has worked in the mainstream performance industry as an actor. Since he settled in the city, much of what Entrecalles work is about is influenced by his experiences as an actor in this mainstream industry and as a director and actor of Entrecalles. These experiences —marked by his position as a ‘Latin American postcolonial immigrant’ in Spain— have influenced the political attitude that the company has adopted. The company attempts to respond to the institutional neoliberal city planning of Madrid and to postcolonial traces in the Spanish cultural industry. Both restrain the company’s capability to participate fully in the cultural industry and the performance circuits. Consequently, Entrecalles has kept its distance from institutional domains in the cultural mainstream sectors and engaged in alternative ways to perform in the city. To do this, Entrecalles has made use of the *barrio* —neighbourhood— of Lavapiés and created alternative routes to those offered by institutions and mainstream venues. In parallel with this, they have produced a form of de-institutionalisation of performance through what they term *libre* —free— theatre. To analyse this aim of Entrecalles to produce *alter*-forms of cultural engagements in the city it is first appropriate to understand the meaning of the *barrio* in an urban context such as Madrid and how this meaning is shaped in the company’s main action field: Lavapiés. As said before, I use the term *barrio* with two meanings: 1) As a political dimension broadened by a shared political attitude of collectives and individuals from diverse parts of the city who *conviven* (coexist) as ‘neighbours’ in Lavapiés and present resistance to forms of power. 2) As a trans-territorial dimension by which diverse groups and individuals meet in Lavapiés creating networks which lead to other parts of the city and locations. In both senses of the term, Entrecalles is participating in the creation of the *barrio*.

A highly regarded study which comprehends the idea of *barrio* is Philippe Bourgois' book "In Search of Respect: Selling crack in El Barrio" (1996). Philippe Bourgois researched life in the *barrio* of Puerto Ricans in New York and traced the meanings of the use of space in an area considered a ghetto. Bourgois analysed the character of the *barrio* ethnically marked by a dominant Latin American representation and the codes of interaction, values and youth symbolisms conducted in their daily lives. In Spanish academic circles, the meaning of the term *barrio* has been contrasted to how it is understood in the U.S. claiming there is a more specific contextualisation of the social dynamics in the Spanish terrain, as well as a differentiation in its translation into English (neighbourhood). Alberto Corsín and Adolfo Estalella explore this differentiation by analysing particular experiences that emanated from assemblies that occurred in the city of Madrid after the emergence of the *Indignados* political movement in 2011. Corsín and Estalella highlight the ways that these assemblies 'make neighbours' 'through a process of deambulation, and through an investment in the rhythmic and atmospheric production of space' (2012:1). These *barrio* assemblies arose after the eviction from the centre of the city of the activist movement which acted against governmental austerity policies. This political movement retreated from the full view of the international media in the central area of Sol to continue the struggle inside *barrios* like Lavapiés. In their work, Corsín and Estalella note the particularity of the word *barrio* under this political umbrella:

The word 'neighbourhood' is a poor rendition for the Spanish voice *barrio*, although it is now well established as an equivalent in Latino urban studies [...] In the Spanish context the *barrio* has connotations of provinciality, even familiarity. [...] these are the terms that people deliberately employ to signal an emerging repertoire of urban values and practices of conviviality. The project of reclaiming an urban commons is voiced today in the name of the neighbourhood (2012:3).

This description understands that a neighbour is not 'stranger, nor a friend, nor a kin' (2012:2) but a subject who 'lives the *barrio*' yet, as my research shows, is not always necessarily settled in the neighbourhood. Frequently I have heard Carlos affirming he lived in Lavapiés, although neither he nor the other members of Entrecalles were settled in Lavapiés during my fieldwork; yet they moved and 'lived' in the area by using the codes of mutual recognition with other 'users'. The main reason for Entrecalles to move predominantly around Lavapiés is due the high percentage of spaces there that permit them to perform outside mainstream circuits. Lavapiés is one of the main epicentres in Madrid of political and artistic collectives who claim 'a right to the city' in response to the neoliberal urban planning of Madrid. Consequently, groups such as Entrecalles, which lack a place to rehearse or institutional support, find in this area multiple 'nooks' in which to develop their projects. Carlos has approached different collectives in Lavapiés always with a social-artistic interest. He has worked as a performance teacher for an organisation of homeless people. As well, he has offered himself to organise a performance workshop in La Tabacalera and has been asking a favour from some other organisations and associations to lend Entrecalles a room to rehearse. These encounters have created a network of informal chains, facilitating Carlos to meet different actors and persons interested in

collaborating with alternative performance groups. At the same time, it has facilitated the extension of its chains towards other *barrios* of the city.

The welcome by Lavapiés to art-collectives of such diverse backgrounds as Entrecalles, is rooted in its multiculturalism. It is an area which hosts about ninety nationalities, appropriately popularly named ‘barrio de las Naciones Unidas’ —‘United Nations neighbourhood’. As well, Lavapiés is well known as a popular *barrio* for working class people which, from the end of the nineteenth century, has received immigrants from diverse parts of Spain. The *barrio* has acquired a marginal character because of its humble buildings and predominantly working class inhabitants and so has become a stereotype of a dangerous area in touristic guides and the mass media (see Méndez Méndez, 2012:269). Further, as the sociologist Fernando Díaz signals (Díaz 2007), since the area has become one of the preferred settlements for incomers from Africa, Latin America and Asia, its aura of criminalisation and marginality has been specially increased in the media. Lavapiés houses a majority of Ecuadorians, followed in number by Moroccans and Chinese. As well, other Latin Americans and Asian, plus Romanians and Sub-saharans. However, these data do not accurately reflect the reality of the *barrio* since it is difficult to measure those who are not registered on the city census. One reason why ‘immigrants’ who arrived from the 90s have been attracted to Lavapiés is its centrality and low rental of the old houses that exist there. The structure of the *barrio* is marked by narrow streets lined with old buildings, with a predominant mixture of small shops and restaurants run by the newest incomers that sell products from their countries, and new ‘fashion’ bars and restaurants run by Spanish. The *barrio* has various squares, such as ‘Lavapiés’, ‘Nelson Mandela’ and ‘Agustín Lara’, where ‘old’ and ‘new’ neighbours sit while peoples from other parts of the city are continually passing by. There exist various spaces that, since their abandonment by institutions or their owners, have been occupied by political and artistic collectives. This attracts many ‘neighbours’ from other parts of Madrid interested in offering social and cultural services inside some of the multiple organisations that exist there. All this creates a visual *mélange* of peoples and collectives that transit through its streets and squares, creating a feeling of continued —although relaxed— movement and *convivencia* —conviviality— between peoples of different backgrounds.

I am helped by the approach that the anthropologist Liliana Suárez Navaz offers by her use of this term *convivencia*, to explain the process by which diverse collectives in Lavapiés engage in the construction of ‘neighbour’ through art and political expressions. Using this term I am not attempting to say that there might not exist discrepancies based on racial, class, gender and nationality divisions between themselves. Rather I am explaining how the idea of *barrio* helps to resist the potential gentrification caused by the rise of neoliberal urban planning and how Entrecalles appropriates this idea for its artistic benefit. Suárez employs the term of *convivencia* to explain how ‘immigrants’ in Spain engage in the construction of ‘common rules of social behaviour’ and a ‘common belonging to a shared civil sphere that makes room for a non-homogeneous and transnational cultural identification and belonging’ (Suárez 2005b: 192). It refers to personal and social relations among peoples at various

levels, such as family, city, a village or a *barrio*, by which people negotiate norms of behaviour and a common sense of belonging to one or more political communities. As the author suggests, *convivencia* can surge under the shared notion of political interests between different communities, nationalities, ethnic groups, persons; but this does not necessarily involve the existence of a shared identity nor imply that social inequalities are not reproduced. However, it opens a way for negotiation in the process by which people are sharing the same space. The *convivencia* I saw with Entrecalles in Lavapiés was marked by a sense of reciprocity and art-political activism during the search for engagements and continued negotiations in the use of the spaces of the *barrio*. For instance, Entrecalles was negotiating for months with some people who had occupied a plot called ‘El Solar’ in Lavapiés to perform there. Due to the plot having no roof, they waited until summer to avoid any vicissitudes with the weather. When Entrecalles just was about to perform, the plot received the news that it would be evicted by the council. So Entrecalles performance was re-arranged to be the last event happening in the plot before its eviction. Unlucky, just before their performance, it started to rain and Entrecalles considered cancelling it. However, ‘El Solar’ occupiers appealed for waiting until the rain passed. Entrecalles accepted, although the rain hindered the work and rhythm of the actors, as Carlos explains:

We were a long time placing everything; having problems because we didn’t have enough power for the spotlights. And suddenly, it started to rain. So, we had to dismantle everything hastily. But someone from the plot said: ‘C’mon, we’re going to be evicted!! We have to do it, because the plot is almost over!!’ So we organised everything again in 10 minutes. The costumes were completely wet. But we did it. In the last scene, as my costume was wet I wore a T-shirt with black and white stripes. And after the performance, a woman came to ask me why Picasso was in the last scene (laughs).

There is no representation of Picasso in the play that Entrecalles performed. This case is just an instance of the multiple times Entrecalles has negotiated and adapted to the necessities of other users of spaces in Lavapiés, or has been subjected to multiple changes provoked by the frequent vicissitudes involved in working in these spaces characterised by informality. However, this created a sense of *convivencia* built under negotiations that symbolically gave to Entrecalles ‘a right to belong to the *barrio* as a neighbour’, due to their contributing to the meaning of *barrio*; i.e. the right to be symbolically a ‘neighbour’ was not built by just being in the space or passing by, but through a *convivencia* and commitment with other ‘neighbours’, who could also be either settled or not.

This right to belong to the *barrio* of Lavapiés as a ‘neighbour’ was evident also in the verbal symbols used in the actions by activists who claimed a ‘right to defend the *barrio*’. Before evictions of squats, private houses and forms of policing control over ‘immigrants’, members of collectives such as the anti-racist collective Brigadas Vecinales —Neighbourhood Brigades— and other ‘neighbours’ organised improvised forms of resistance. During these actions, peoples who came from diverse parts

of the city and backgrounds shouted: ‘We’re not delinquents, we’re the *vecinos* —neighbours’.<sup>5</sup> Empirically these instances show that the symbolic construction of a *barrio* like Lavapiés does not always correlate to a ‘neighbourhood’ in a ‘classic’ territorial sense, yet rather, it is metaphorically constructed by a *convivencia* and commitment between peoples of diverse backgrounds in shared spaces. Furthermore, Lavapiés is not a neighbourhood per se yet it is a *barrio* in the social imaginary. Officially Lavapiés is simply an area of the neighbourhood of Embajadores which is inside the Centre District yet it is famously recognised as such by the people in Madrid and other parts of Spain. As Massó Guijarro explains, symbolically and spatially Lavapiés extends far beyond its territorial limits; i.e. the mosaic of social experiences that happen in Lavapiés engages with other spaces in Madrid and even outside Madrid. So that, symbolically Lavapiés is multi-situated, not only spatially but also in contexts of similar artistic and political meanings (Guijarro 2013: 80), because the network and chains created through a *convivencia* of peoples from different backgrounds and places of the city, ables to know about others’ spaces on the *barrios* of the city where political and artistic collectives with similar interests are located. This symbolical extension of the *barrio* will later help us to understand how Entrecalles appropriates the political and artistic meaning of the *barrio* to expand their scope to other areas.

As Díaz Orieta explains (Orieta 2007) Lavapiés is just one example of the multiple working class areas in Spain that from the 70-80s have been a focus of social mobilisation within the context of political transition from dictatorship to democracy. Since the 90s the squatter movement has become strong in areas such as this, linking to anti-globalisation movements, which in turn are linked to other international movements such as the Zapatistas in Mexico. Part of the local concerns and protests of squatters in Madrid has been about inequalities on the urban agenda and the housing conditions. The squatter movement has been reclaiming public spaces and attacking the ‘speculative aspect of the current urban planning model’ that areas such as Lavapiés have been suffering. Squatters have joined other kinds of groups such as neighbourhood associations, environmental and cultural associations and NGOs, who have participated in the resistance to local and regional authorities’ insistence to include Madrid in the process of neoliberal urbanism similar to other cities in Europe. The role of the local and state institutions has been directed to creating legal, political and economic conditions for a model which points to the ‘new economy’ of middle class consumption. This is responding to the neoliberalisation of the city of Madrid which is emerging in a series of institutional measures that have been taken in the city. Débora Ávila and Sergio García have done a study about this neoliberal planning of Madrid, highlighting that some of these institutional measures are based on the extension of forms of control over the street, augmenting the budgets for ‘civil security’ and reducing those for social services. This is occurring in a context of high unemployment rates and impoverishment in the country since 2007. They signal how social workers and other workers as educators are more and more acting in a policing way, thus complementing the already increased control over citizens by

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<sup>5</sup> See ‘Los vecinos de Lavapiés echan a la policía del barrio’ [Lavapiés neighbours chases the police out from the barrio] (2011).



police, instead of attending to most urgent necessities as a consequence of the increased impoverishment (Ávila & García 2015). In addition, as Matthew Feinberg shows, control over the use of the space has extended also to spaces that are acting as self-managed social centres which are dedicated to providing space for social and cultural activities for under-served neighbourhoods, such as La Tabacalera in Lavapiés. Specifically, the Ministry of Culture has taken part of the Tabacalera building for its cultural purposes and has left in the hand of some collectives the daily management of some areas while maintaining control and regulating the opening hours (Feinberg 2013). There has been also a growing interest in transforming Lavapiés to make it more attractive for tourism due to its central location.

Due to this increase in the forms of policing control on the use of urban spaces, there has been a rise in protests, disagreements and encounters with the police. In the case of street musicians, for instance, they have seen their chance to perform in public areas reduced by local authorities restrictions<sup>6</sup> (see Sousa 2015 and forthcoming PhD thesis). As an effect of this increased control on the use of public spaces, Entrecalles—which before had organised performances on the streets of Lavapiés—declined to keep doing them, because, as Carlos told me, many of their actors are Latin Americans and they wanted to avoid any possible problem. Although these restrictions apply to other *barrios* of Madrid, it is important to note that Lavapiés is one of the main epicentres of racist and other forms of policing, as signaled in research by the collective Brigadas Vecinales (see Brigadas Vecinales de Derechos Humanos 2012).

The shared idea to resist to this ‘neoliberal urban planning of Madrid’ by different collectives has fostered a *convivencia* in Lavapiés and created an ‘ideal’ atmosphere for groups such as Entrecalles whose nationalities embodied in racialised Otherness have all experienced restrictions to fit inside this ‘European’ urban and cultural planning. Art has been probably the main motor to initiate intercultural encounters and to, as Ángeles Carnacea points out, ‘recognise common experiences’ between collectives (Carnacea 2011b: 185). Numerous artistic and politic groups have been working on joining voices and struggles, such as the ‘SOS Racismo Madrid’, other theatre groups, other squats such as the ‘Patio Maravillas’ and ‘El Campo de la Cebada’, ‘La Corrala’ neighbourhood association, etc. (see more in Carnacea & Lozano 2011). Accordingly, many of the political encounters and much of the life in Lavapiés in general is a mosaic of different cultures, and as well of different social classes. This involves, in order to foster a *convivencia*, differences and interests being continuously re-thought and negotiated, during which discrepancies can arise. Yet the importance of the artistic and cultural expressions is that they offer tools to ‘transform the city or the *barrio*’; to enable resistance within it. As suggested by Mikel Aramburu in this study on the use of urban spaces by ‘immigrants’, in the original countries of immigrants living in Spain there is a greater social self-regulation in the use of

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<sup>6</sup> See ‘Potato Omelette Band in street musicians auditions of Madrid’ (2014). This ‘in street musicians audition’ was organised by the council of Madrid to determinate which bands would get authorisation to play in the streets of Madrid.

public space and more tolerance of casual appropriations (Aramburu 2005:34). This Lavapiés symbolic idea of *barrio* fosters an informal —but negotiated— ‘appropriation’ that creates a feeling of *convivencia*. Below, I will explain in more detail why Entrecalles has found this context more appealing than other more institutionalised spaces of the city.

## 2. Institutional, Alternative and *Libre* Theatre

### THE DUST OF MY BONES

by Carlos Alcalde

A fun play about immigration, from the dawn of humanity to nowadays.

Six actors from different backgrounds and diverse racial traits, embody dozen of characters, frequently verging on the absurd (as human beings), the comic and the emotional.

The play leads us through centuries, millenniums... From the primitive man, going by first civilisations and big empires, to contemporary times ... where —apparently— old schemes of exclusion to those who are different, speak another language or have another skin colour, repeat.

CULTURE DOES NOT HAVE A PRICE ... BUT VALUE!



The above sign belongs to the next Entrecalles performance which took place almost two months after the one in Orcasitas. During those months the company had various rehearsals where Carlos and the actors discussed whether the idea of focusing their efforts on the *barrio* was agreed by all. New actors had arrived: the already mentioned Marcelo, and Lula —of Spanish background— who replaced Maria. So the political attitude that the company was taking had to be re-negotiated with the newcomers. It was agreed that the *barrio* would be the preference for Entrecalles. This marked a distance from the institutional spaces in the official theatres, and as well, from the state domain which had hold over other private spaces that a priori did not seem institutionalised: small venues popularly defined as ‘alternative theatres’. More than simply a rejection of the ‘alternative theatres’ or their owners *per se*, it had to do with the social differences that magnify as an effect of the state domain

having domain over public and private spaces, through a series of preconditions placed on institutional funding that theaters receive. These funding preconditions can be described as Corrigan and Sayer (2007) suggest as a ‘cultural revolution’ by which the state —through its legal system— defines, classifies and regulates the population in terms of gender, ethnicity, class, ‘race’, etc. These social classifications have the effect of reducing the chances of Entrecalles to perform on funded spaces. The concept of ‘cultural revolution’ will assist us to see the ‘state from below’ acting in public and private spaces. Further, it will expose how Entrecalles members construct the idea of ‘*libre* —free— theatre’ as a rejection of the social position they hold in the cultural planning of the state. The ethnographic instances that follow will illustrate the idea of ‘*libre* theatre’ being in dialogue with practices so called ‘institutional’ and ‘alternative’; although none of these should be understood as rigid categories, they are manifestations of social differences in arts sphere that places emphasis on nationalised productions.

For this second performance, we went to a city adjacent to Madrid, Alcalá de Henares. Marcelo had proposed that the group perform at the launching of a self managed cultural association — El Adefesio — that he ran with a friend. I arrived at El Adefesio about three hours before the performance and the actors were already there helping Marcelo to arrange the space. I met Jose on the street working on the construction of an improvised dressing room. Marcelo, dressed in overalls, moved around the association space fixing multiple things and making a screen that would hang from the ceiling. Carlos was giving directions to the actors; and the rest, Juliana, Lula and Ben, were listening to him while placing chairs and putting on their costumes in the section of the floor allocated as an improvised dressing room. That day a new person, Nico was working for the first time with this group. He was an Argentinean lighting technician, who had worked before with Entrecalles on another play, but had only been able to assist at one of the rehearsals for this performance. So he was reviewing the script with Carlos while trying to repair the lid of Carlos’ laptop that he would later use. As well, there was Ben’s friend who joined the group in placing the chairs. After three hours in which people did not stop working, nerves started to emerge. Neighbours of this *barrio*’s association were arriving and there were still things left to do. I could hear Nico joking and complaining about the laptop: ‘Next time a laptop that works would be great.’ Close to him was Ben, kneeling on the floor. He said something in Arabic to his friend, who translated it for us: ‘He’s asking for silence to make his prayers.’ Ben’s friend and I were cutting flyers and putting them on each chair. At the same time, Carlos was trying to attract the attention of those who were occupied doing their last voice and body exercises. Then, when tensions of neighbours waiting outside, and of us inside, were reaching a critical level, Carlos called everyone to attention from the centre of the room:

‘Come here, please.’ The actors approached him making a circle. ‘Nico, come; Ángeles, come. You’re going to like this.’ I joined them and put my hand over the hands forming a closed circle. Carlos put his hand over mine. ‘On three, you have to say ‘*mierda*’ [shit]. But everyone has to, OK? Otherwise, it will bring bad luck. One, two, three!’

Everyone: [moving our hands] *Mierda*!!

The formed circle of hands and the shout brought some kind of calm and concentration and everybody went back to their positions. Neighbours entered the room and sat down to wait for the play to begin. Nico was trying to start the opening-video which would be projected onto the screen. After a few minutes and attempts, he told me to go and tell the actors that the video did not work and to come out. Everybody seemed calmer than me. Ben's friend told me not to worry: 'Nico will give them a signal to enter the room'. Suddenly, Nico turned off the focus that illuminated the screen. I took that as the signal, but I was mistaken. Later, it was clarified that Nico took it out simply because the laptop screen was reflected on the ceiling screen and Marcelo — the first actor to appear in the scene — had just entered the room extempore. Despite these unforeseen incidents, the play continued. The audience seemed to enjoy it, laughing exuberantly at different scenes, especially the one depicting the appearance of the "first dinghy in history," i.e., the arrival of Columbus in America. After the performance, Marcelo directed some words to the audience. He introduced the association to the *barrio*, describing it as a cultural meeting point for the neighbours. Then he placed a small decorated box on the floor, and explained it was advertising the neighbourhood shop which had donated the box and apologized for such blatant advertising. He 'invited' the audience to make a donation based on what they could afford and how much they enjoyed the performance. Then Carlos, took the floor to explain that this donation support was related to Entrecalles habit of promoting a 'non-advance admission fee' for performances. This, he continued, was to help them to extend both theatre and culture to all social strata and to situate the company in those spaces where the 'institutional culture' and 'cultural industry' were absent; i.e. those spaces that metaphorically constructs the *barrio*. He concluded by acknowledging the audience's assistance, whether or not they actually contributed a donation.

El Adefesio space and its policy 'to be a meeting point for the *barrio*' meshed with the idea of *libre* theatre that Entrecalles was creating. El Adefesio's policy shared the idea of 'non giving a fixed price' for the neighbours. This concept of understanding and offering culture for 'all social strata' aimed to counteract governmental gaps in order to facilitate society access to culture. High prices of tickets in conventional theaters plus the 21% cultural VAT by Spanish government, had made theatre available only to middle and upper classes. This is specially significant in a context of economic crisis and high rates of unemployment as that existed in Spain at the time of this fieldwork. As in the above example, after every performance, Entrecalles had the routine of leaving a box or similar object for donations. The box was left by itself in the centre of the room so that donors could be symbolically voluntary and inconspicuous. Among the bustle and noise of people who got up after the performance, whoever wanted to, could approach the box and 'give a value' to the play, as El Adefesio sign suggested. As per usual, some people left notes, the majority some coins and a few just left the room.

In a pragmatic way these performances symbolised an added value for Entrecalles: the play, as I will explain more fully in chapter three, was full of meanings arising from the subjectivities and

experiences of Entrecalles members as Latin American ‘postcolonial immigrants’ in Spain. For them, the more people saw the play, the more people would receive those ‘messages’ which was important due to the frustrated attempts of Entrecalles to perform in venues of institutional domain. One reason why their attempts were frustrated concerns the manner in which the professionalism of Latin American actors and performances is interpreted in Spain. In this regard, the Spanish drama director Guillermo Heras (Heras, 2006) considers that it is ‘deplorable’ so little interest exists in network programmers theatres to show Latin American performances; ones that, ironically, frequently share the Spanish language. He believes, this is due to the extended prejudice that considers ‘Latin American theatre’ as journeying between two poles: one folkloristic; and other political. His vision is similar to the analysis of Lourdes Méndez (Méndez 1995, 2004, 2006) who argues the colonial and patriarchal legacy of the ‘artistic world’ fosters a ‘neo-primitivism’ that permeates the gendered and racial differentiations in non-Westernised artist productions. Although I am in complete agreement with these approaches, it is necessary to ask why the state takes this stance; i.e., is there any related reason why there is ‘little interest’ in including ‘Latin American performances’ in theatre programming? As Sonia Cajade explains (Cajade, 2009) theatre can contribute to creating ideas, values and critical power, just as Entrecalles is using the *barrio* to extend their messages. Yet as well, as the author explains, it can reproduce and legitimise the social order. For Cajade, the so-called ‘alternative theatre’ represents a counter-hegemonic function that questions the established social structures. From this we could conclude that in ‘alternative theatres’ the social order is not reproduced. However, empirically, the domain of the state, via its ‘cultural revolution’ has been more present in those so-called ‘alternative theatres’ than it might seem at first glance. Which takes us to return to the work of Corrigan and Sayer and place the state in the central analysis.

The words *alternative*, ‘official’ or *institutional* were randomly used by the majority of actors and performance workers I talked with. Whereas there was no shared fixed definition between themselves, critical voices pointed out that the *alternative* theatres did not always have a ‘counter hegemonic’ character. *Institutional* theatre came to be understood as synonymous with ‘official’ ones, referring to big venues funded by local or state institutions whose performances had a preference for ‘nationalised’ narratives. At times, this kind of theatre was also called *aristotelian*.<sup>7</sup> *Alternative* theatre was generally understood as occurring in smaller theatres, in which some intercultural engagements and transforming languages did happen. However, this type of theatre also often received institutional funding. Although *institutional* and *alternative* theatre can be differentiated, they share an interaction with institutions through funding. The first time that I realised the reach this state domain was when I asked Carlos why they did not try to submit their plays to some small ‘alternative’ theatres:

Look. I know that all the theatres. . . the alternative theatres, receive funding. A proportion of that funding is for them to promote national authors. . . Spanish authors and contemporary.

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<sup>7</sup> Augusto Boal (2008) uses the term ‘Aristotelian system’ to define a conception of performances in which the spectator is passive; in contrast to the performance he proposes in which the spectator is stimulated to participate in the play and with it, to transform the society. Nowadays, the ‘aristotelian’ concept remains in the performance jargon to describe productions that are “classic”; without a “transforming language”.

Because when I go to some theatres, some people tell me. They know I'm living here for a long time, so they think I'm nationalised. And since they assume that I'm Spanish, they tell me. But I'm not.

Although Carlos qualifies for Spanish nationality he has never applied. He considers that the bureaucratic process is very convoluted and claims to have experienced humiliating moments when approaching state officials. As Carlos is the main script-writer and director of the company, his lack of national status leaves the company in a disadvantaged position since the funding preconditions 'reward' nationalised productions. This bureaucratic character of funding means that the 'state domain' determines their preconditions. In other words, the 'cultural revolution' is marked by the promoting of plays that conform to the state's cultural production purposes. During 2013, local, regional and state institutions offered the following grants for small theatres. The City Council of Madrid designated 380,000€ for private entrepreneurs — small theatres— and 45,000 € for cinema-festivals organised by non-profit institutions (BOAM. núm. 6993). Qualifying requirements were that theatres must have had a minimum of 100 representations and been opened from the previous year. In relation to the point assessments, points were given to those theatres which had a minimum of 100 performances scheduled for next year, that included children's theatre; and up to 10 points were given to those which included living authors or authors granted the 'López de Vega prize'. This prize is promoted by the council to support theatre scripts. In 2012 it was not awarded but in previous years, the majority of the prizewinners were of Spanish nationality. Obviously, any candidate is obligated to include Spanish authors in their programming, because if they do, they get more points for the competition. As well, there are other actions which can be rewarded by the funding points. For the regional Madrid government, the application required theatres to have four years of experience; it gave more points to plays which included the unemployed and also those which were original and Spanish ('Ayudas para la realización de Actividades de teatro y danza', B.O.C.M. 2013:175). Meanwhile, the state government included funding for companies to tour around the country. It made allusion to plays that promote social inclusion of groups which are discriminated against for 'race, origin, gender, age, disability or other characteristics.' Yet at the same time, it awarded more points to plays whose author is Spanish from the 19th century or before (which received 5 points), the 20th century (which received 4 points) and 21st century (which received 6 points) (B.O.E. 2013).

Although there is still room for non-nationalised authors, the emphasis on Spanish-national authors and plays clearly does not represent the multiculturalism of the last decades in Spain. These funding preconditions change periodically. Over the course of specific historical-policy tendencies, bureaucratization has been drawn into new legislation, demanding 'users' continuously refresh their bureaucratic knowledge in order to identify citizenship boundaries. Although Carlos normally rejects these guidelines as much as any other bureaucratic process, Entrecalles did try to approach an *alternative* theatre. Then, they were asked to offer a play that had not been released before. The reasons why *alternative* theatres want this is because it is a way to attract audience; i.e. if the play has

not been seen before, there is a greater chance to get the company friends to assist at the performance. This friendship support was evident at the majority of Entrecalles performances. For the Entrecalles actors, theatres ‘leave in the hands of the companies all the work to attract audiences’. About this, Lula affirmed: ‘I’m sick of having my friends paying all the time!’ An analysis of how bureaucracy and the rules of the state also affect theatres is necessary here. I interviewed one of the owners of the Plot Point theater in Madrid, an Argentinean actress who runs this small place with her husband:

On this scale, the institution which gives the funding makes the decisions as to which kinds of theatres they want to stimulate. You get more points in relation to the amount of new releases of Spanish authors. So.. well .. one decides as a theater if one wants to do that. But as one has to get an amount of points for that scale to be granted, you make the effort. [...] Each institution gives support to what is of its interest, or what they are looking for or their political decision.

So, yeah, one has to take the decision: do I want to be absolutely independent and put on my theatre what I please, or..?

This enterprise, the theatre, is run by both of us and my son. We’re here for 12 years. First five years were about work, work, work. We didn’t touch any grant, because it wasn’t the model for me. You have to read it, understand it, look for the papers,.. [...] Here, there are so many regulations,.. You have to answer to everything to the European Union and the European Union normative. We have seven bathrooms. Could you tell me what for? Because the European Union says we must have a bathroom for this, and women and men must be divided, and I don’t know what else,.. I understand that they have to safeguard, but,... There was a moment in which we offered ‘theatre snacks for children’. The snack was a packaged muffin and a juice brick. I mean, there wasn’t food handling, right? A health inspector came, because we had a sign on the showcase which said ‘snack’. I explained him everything. [...] And he decided that we had to put a bar, a room, a room for rubbish,.. 3,000€ it cost us!

I’m not against the legality. But it’s too much! Soundproofing this place was,...! We had soundproofing already but the regulation changed. We had done it for grade 1, which is what it was asked for before, and we got a new one of 3.2; [which is] for discotheques! It was very expensive!! [...] But the normative does not mean the same here as in Germany,.. Specially considering how things are,.. [financial crisis]. I can’t whip back the soundproofing on a ticket! So how do I get that money back? It is unfeasible! Theatre is unfeasible!!

Marina kept telling me about more constructions they had to make in the theatre-room since European legislations had become more demanding than Spanish ones. Then I asked her about any preference for releases on her theatre:

Releases is what people want most, because you take your friends with you, darling! If a company comes with a spectacle that I like and it has not been released, and another one comes, that I like but it has been released,..., Well...darling, I look at the first most fondly! But not because I’m a speculator!

I also interviewed other people involved in the performance industry, who I met during Entrecalles performances or to whom Entrecalles members introduced me. All of them were Latin Americans and friends to some member of Entrecalles. They shared similar concerns to those of Entrecalles members. Between them, a Chilean actor, Rodrigo described the complexity to maintain an ‘idyllic alternative’ theatre:

I understand that there is a kind of theatre which names itself ‘alternative’, but it’s still commercial, with a classic flavour, or whatever; that it is not properly a search for an alternative language. Why? Because there are many actors with their creations and we all don’t have access to the big theatres, to the institutionals. And the alternative theatre also embraces these kinds of spectacles because it has to survive.

The alternative theatre I have worked in, is in the kinds of companies that have their own languages of research, which propose different things. A company I’ve worked with is Teatro en el Aire; which is a derivative of the Theatre of the Senses by Enrique Vargas [...] a Colombian whose work resides in the five senses, where the audience is not a spectator, but joins in and lives the experience. I’m working in two of the theatre productions of this company. [...] And there are not festivals in Spain anymore. The ‘paid-festival’ is over. It’s over,... Years back, we did four or five festivals with those plays. And currently, no. This is the kind of alternative theatre I mean.

‘The ‘paid-festival is over’ reflects the existing tendency of the local and national governmental during this fieldwork. Generally there has been a decrease of institutional support for the culture and this has been reflected not only in the amount of festivals but also in the closure of some theaters in the city of Madrid. In some of these cases they have been closed due to the same local regulation against noise in Madrid applied with to street musicians. Since some of the theatres are old, they cannot adjust the room soundproofing to the requirements. So, under this context, the role of ‘alternative’ theatres in their promotion of ‘alternative languages’ was differently understood by theatre staff I interviewed. Meanwhile Carlos expressed his belief that ‘alternative’ theatre should be socially engaged; a ‘social theatre’, which could be done with little means. In this regard, Carlos links *alternative* theatre with a *libre* one and considers the latter is a real expression of what the first should be. The first time I heard the term *libre* used by Entrecalles members was in a conversation between Nico and Carlos. Two of the actors, Marcelo and Jose, lamenting the insufficiency of festivals, were insisting on presenting the company in amateur festivals. The problem was that to do that, the company would need to get a document from the city council which would classify them as ‘amateur’. And this did not sound good to some. A scarcity of work does not imply a lack of professionalism and by applying for that certificate that might pigeonhole them as ‘non-professionals’. They concluded then: ‘We’re not alternatives, we’re not amateurs. We do *libre* theatre’. Thus, by saying *libre* they were not rejecting an ‘alternative language’ or *their* venues, but the social differentiation and classification that is reflected in them through state economic support. So that, they opted for fostering a form of theatre that



‘survives’ outside institutional funding; neighbouring to the multi-situated *barrio* and *libre* —free— from funding preconditions.

A *libre* production correlates to what some authors have described as a ‘rise of informality’ inside neoliberal economies. The comparative work of Stephen Boyle and Carmen Johan about the informal economies in arts in Australia and the U.S. point to the art sectors as one of the main epicentres of informalities. Although they consider informalities are present at any society regardless of its economic situation, they believe it is growing with the recent financial crisis that put at risk a significant percentage of jobs. Yet its importance, they signal, lies in the component of the informal arts that ‘creates great value for society’ (Boyle & Johan 2013:160). Similarly, Arlene Dávila points to the necessity of examining the intriguing contradiction of neoliberalism which tends to praise entrepreneurship and individual agency in economic matters at the same time as it restricts populations through a growing policing (Dávila 2012: 49). She focuses our attention on the error of ignoring the value of cultural workers and initiatives that are not institutionalized, packaged and profitable (2012: 15). Instead, she offers clues to consider the exchange value that is generated from the use value of a particular community as well as the benefits for local residents and the economic wellbeing of the city at large (2012:11). This approach is very pertinent for Entrecalles’ informal or *libre* productions which can reach more social strata. Yet in the Entrecalles case extra value can be added, which is the reward conferred by the chance to be heard and viewed. In this sense, the *barrio* and the neighbours play a significant role which reciprocally transfers to Entrecalles an economic value — materialised in donations— and symbolic value —in the form of recognition and visibility of a Latin American company which does not identify with the ‘normal’ spaces for culture. As Carmen Olavechea and Georg Engeli argue (2011), creative processes which strengthen and unfold identity can provide a pathway to ‘escape from the obscurity’ of exclusion to be viewed, heard, felt and registered by others. It is this obscurity which has lead Entrecalles to adopt an attitude of ‘liberation’ from the national and postcolonial realms.

How the ‘cultural revolution’ I have been alluding to is constructed inside postcolonial thought can be approached by the mentioned work of anthropologist Verena Stolcke. A sense of colonial racism has been inscribed in the Spanish nation through what Stolcke (1995) describes as a ‘cultural fundamentalism’ emerging in contemporary European countries with the arrival of citizen of its former colonies. Difference from other incomers, former colonial people are signaled as ‘immigrants’, although this cultural fundamentalism extends also to other migrants coming from countries conceived as being ‘naturally inferior’. As Stolcke explains, this form of modern Western racism rationalises a national superiority for economic exploitation of groups of individuals by attributing them certain moral, intellectual or social defects. Yet instead of ordering different cultures hierarchically as in the colonial period, this cultural fundamentalism segregates them spatially; i.e. these ‘immigrants’ are expected to move only in some sectors of society, such as the service one. The transnational analysis of Liliana Suárez Navaz (2007) is designed along similar lines. Suárez discusses the dichotomy

‘national/immigrant’ in light of the Bourdieu influenced concept of ‘transnational migrant field’. Through ethnographic research with Latin Americans living in Madrid, she shows how a key variable is the national construction in which cultural differences that were constructed in the colonial context are re-defined with similar functions in the postcolonial era. Thus, the dichotomy ‘national/immigrant’ is configured through the construction ‘normal/abnormal’ in relation to territory. The national is seen as rooted in the territory while the ‘immigrant’ is a displaced subject in a situation of mobility that it has to be resolved by the cultural and juridical practices of the state. Suárez’s discussion understands that the classic model of citizenship is obsolete and offers ways to comprehend the ways that social differences are reproduced in cultural productions. Similarly, Néstor García Canclini critiques the state and asserts that a ‘citizenship threshold’ is only granted by the state once every ethnic group can prove itself to be at least competitive enough to access resources relevant to participation in society, including cultural industries (García Canclini 2005:12). Whereas, as we have seen, European, national, regional and local institutions are multiple rulers acting in a simultaneous way, all have exposed Entrecalles’ output to a lack of recognition and unequal competitiveness. It is this inequality that has led Entrecalles to reject specific spaces of the city and look for ‘comfort’ in the *barrio*.

So far, I have tried not to categorise theatre or theatre-s, yet my attempt has been to show that the rules the state uses to organise society extend to spaces that *a priori* can be seen as detached from its domain. I will return now to the spaces in the *barrio* to see how they approach the situation. Their tireless search for their own place with which to identify provokes a sense of disorientation that will be compensated for by the *libre* spaces in the multi-sited *barrio*.

### 3. ‘A space is the only thing I need. We’ll do the rest’

To go back to the *barrio* as an unit of analysis, I will employ the interesting perspective that Chapple and Shannon Jackson offer to analyse the impact that artists have on the urban context. They argue that:

When the neighbourhood is our unit of analysis, rather than the audience, we have a way of understanding what art means in daily lived experience, rather than as a special event occurring in a designated place. By looking at how people construct their experience within the neighbourhood, we discover where they find the space for their own creativity and expression during the day or week, rather than how they consume art marketed from outside (Chapple & Jackson 2010:480).

By following this perspective I am not denying the importance on knowing who comprises the audience. Rather the audience is significant in the sense that they assist to these events outside regular circuits. Yet I am understanding the audience not as an isolated entity, but as forming part of the multi-sited *barrio* and of the meanings that emerge in there. So that, I employ Chapple and Jackson’s focus on the neighbourhood to introduce the experiences of Entrecalles when approaching the *barrio* to find

spaces; and further, to examine which internal conflicts surge around the economic value they get from the audience of the *barrio*. Since Entrecalles lacks their own place to rehearse and perform, they are continuously moving around the multi-sited *barrio* which takes much effort. This is due to the fact that, continuing with Chapple and Jackson, the arts are, generally speaking, a vulnerable profession. Yet we should also note the existence of other vulnerable groups in the *barrio*, with whom Entrecalles must negotiate before performances and rehearsal.

One of the most significant negotiations that opened up an internal debate was when Entrecalles performed for two days at a self-managed cultural association in Carabanchel district, named La Pértiga. Entrecalles, as usual, published its performance on Facebook. Yet on the morning of the first day I saw that Entrecalles warned there were last minute changes: La Pértiga required the audience to become association members by paying 1€ to get into the room. When Carlos told the news to the actors, Lula reacted angrily:

I don't understand why they will charge for a ticket!! So we are offering a *libre* entry ... *gratis* —non-paid—culture, so everyone can have access to culture... and they charge people?!!

The association members had not talked about their policy with Carlos —the person who arranged this performance— until that morning. With this membership-ticket they were looking for ways to support themselves as a self-managed space. Whether Entrecalles members liked it or not, they had to accept the last minutes changes if they wanted to perform there; even though Entrecalles would not get any economic benefit from this membership. Thus, on the board located at the room gate which announced the performance (see picture below), the words were changed to note the '1€ for membership'. However, the word *libre* remained as an emblem of Entrecalles in attempt to get some economic reward for themselves. This incident in effect opened a Pandora's Box, in which actors started to express their personal problems. Although the philosophy of Entrecalles was to recycle as much as possible, the benefit they receive from the *libre* donations covers little more than their expenses. Thus, some of them suggested that they should start to charge a small price and pay more attention to the economic value of their works. One of the most critical voices was coming from Jose, who was a father and jokingly commented: 'When I go to buy food, the trader doesn't tell me 'pay me what you consider you should pay me'. They charge a price. Even worse when I have to pay my bills'. Others considered that the symbolic value was more important than the economic one, since with a *libre* entry their messages would reach more sectors of society. After these conversations, all seemed to agree on how some audiences might confuse *libre* with *gratis* given that *libre* is driven by economic support and reward for their efforts and artistic production, whereas *gratis* means that this can be ignored by those who can afford to pay a price. Eventually, all agreed on the proposition that 'free doesn't mean *gratis* '; i.e. *libre* is not synonymous with *gratis*.

Despite these discussions Entrecalles decided not to change its policy in the future. They continued approaching other collectives. Spaces where Entrecalles has been engaging include neighbourhood associations such as in La Pértiga, Orcasitas and El Adefesio, squats such as La Tabacalera and El Solar in Lavapiés and other series of spaces such as jail, the street and Latin American entities such as the Argentinean Hall. The audience during all their performances has been varied, consisting of different social classes, age, gender, backgrounds and interests. In some places, the audience was mainly formed by the *neighbours*, such as in Orcasitas, a predominantly Spanish working class area. Yet in the majority of the spaces, there was a mixture of Entrecalles' friends, users of the spaces, neighbours and followers of drama, with a majority of Spanish and Latin American peoples. Disagreements and debates that can surge in these spaces with a varied mixture of peoples and interests seem unavoidable and even necessary if a *convivencia* is desired. Yet these conflicts should lead us to wonder, as Chapple and Jackson suggest, how paradoxical it is to expect 'artists to attend to the social ills of our contemporary cities' by 'asking one vulnerable sector of society to fix another vulnerable sector of society' (2010:484). The majority of spaces where Entrecalles has moved around were self-managed or were having decreased funding support. However, they have received a continued participation of peoples from diverse backgrounds and social classes. As the anthropologist Mikel Aramburu argues (2005), restrictions that are produced on the use of urban spaces, which are conditioned by gentrification and the growing policing that has happened in Madrid, can lead to compensatory agglomerations in other spaces. Yet the heterogeneity of the different cultural groups and individuals who use them is big, so that it seems little unrealistic to expect all of them to agree to the way they will be used without negotiations.

The case of La Pértiga serves to introduce another series of difficulties that Entrecalles faced. They arrived in La Pértiga after three days performing in other venues. That obligated them to continually move their costumes and stage utensils. At times, this was exhausting, since many of them arrived after some other paid-jobs they had. As Chapple and Jackson point out, in these kinds of informal interactions with the *barrio* it is common that artists have to look for supplementary paid jobs in the commodified industry and other sectors to survive. During the time of this research, all the actors were trying to work in other art circuits. Carlos was the most successful working in TV-series and films, while he also was a teacher at one university in Madrid. Ben worked for diverse NGOs and associations for the 'help of immigrants' and combined it with some roles in theatre and films. Ben arrived in Spain as an actor with his university theatre group. Since he settled in Spain to continue with his studies in Spanish language, he has worked in other sectors such as agricultural and restaurants and has also been homeless for a time. As well, he was involved with diverse Moroccan collectives in Spain, participating in some artistic projects.<sup>8</sup> Marcelo arrived in Spain with a desire to work with the Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar. He had been an actor since he was a child. In his twenties he moved to Norway, following a Norway woman he met in Mexico. He stayed there for some years, also working in the art sectors. Later he went to Spain, and was moving between

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<sup>8</sup> See Habitáfrica (2013)

Barcelona, Madrid and Mexico D.F. until, again, another love would foster his staying in Madrid. Since being in Spain, he has worked in different jobs: in the domestic service, in some roles in films and TV-series and in street performances. Juliana has been an actress since she lived in Buenos Aires. In Madrid she took courses about script-writing and direction. However, acting has given her the chance to ‘survive’ in Madrid. In this city she got involved in feminist collectives and organised some performances with ‘radical feminist texts’, which permitted her to perform in pubs in Lavapiés. As well, she has organised mime workshops for women in a squat in the Carabanchel *barrio*, where she employed the *libre* method of letting participants ‘give an economic value’. Jose is from a working class *barrio* of Madrid, San Blas, and has worked in many different performance projects that he has combined with his job as guitarist in a music band. Lula, who moved from the north of Spain, Asturias, to Madrid, has played some roles in the performance industry, advertisements and also was a performance teacher for elders.

All these are their most featured jobs, but there existed many others. When I asked Carlos whether he would like to have Entrecalles as an unique employment, he answered: ‘Of course. But it’s not possible. Though,.. I’d be OK simply with having a place. *A place [for rehearsal] is the only thing we need. We’ll do the rest*’. In addition to the vicissitudes that are generated by this lack of space, there is also a need to find people whose personal and family circumstances are not an obstacle to maintaining Entrecalles principles. And to get people who are willing to work under scarcity, ‘*to do the rest*’. In Carlos’ opinion, this is more possible to find among Latin American actors, as following explained:

The problem with the Spanish is that they are thinking about becoming a star. And I think this is because of the academies in Spain. When we rehearse at any place, they don’t want to work in some places and complain about everything. And we’re a group which makes things without money. And maybe someone arrives and brings anything and says: ‘Hey, I’ve found this’. And we use it and transform it and make anything which is useful for the play. But Spanish don’t know what to do,.. That’s why I like to work with Latin American actors.

Despite Carlos’ affirmations, I found that Marcelo initially difficulties accepting these conditions to work on their first works together, as he explained to me:

I got very desperate, because I didn’t understand him. I mean, I didn’t understand his methodologies. We were rehearsing in the Retiro, how shabby! How are we going to rehearse in a park? Me! I’m an actor from aged 8! D’you know? And this fellow makes everything from rubbish! From shit! Yeah, I was on the paradigm of the actor. Because I was an Actor. I was one of those genius child. [...] But then later, I made the wardrobe for one of its plays and I saw the play and I said: “This is wonderful! Fuck! Working as he does he got to do what I saw and I thought his techniques and slow methodologies were rubbish!

Repeatedly the Latin American actors in and outside Entrecalles I talked with highlighted a ‘Latino astuteness’ by which you ‘make theatre anywhere, anyhow’ in contrast to Spain where ‘if there’s not

funding, they do nothing'. However, they also said that during the last years, mostly due to the economic crisis, more spaces and artistic groups in Madrid were engaging with alternative —*libre*— forms of producing art in and for the *barrio*. In fact, there have been diverse theatre groups that talk about the existence of counter hegemonic theatre projects in history which share similar characteristics; such as anarchists and socialists groups in Mexico, Spain, Italy and Argentina (see Ekintza Zuzena 2010), the 'Teatro —Theatre— Libre' in Colombia (see Patiño, 2011), 'Teatro del Barrio' in Madrid, 'Teatro Lliure—Libre'— in Barcelona, the 'Micro-Teatro' and 'Nuevo Teatro Transfronterizo' —'New Transborder Theatre—in Madrid. Perhaps, the *libre* form of constructing theatre cannot be exclusively defined as 'Latin American', yet it was subjectively constructed in response to the state domain, as well as to the postcolonial representations of 'Latinos' in the Spanish mediated industry, as I will further extend. What is of our concern now is how the experiences in the *barrio* also mark the group identity of Entrecalles. In spite of conflicts that might arise, the existence of squats, neighbourhood associations and the alike is what helps to maintain Entrecalles objectives. Many of these collectives have seen their doors closed by institutions and their spaces have been reified, privatised or used for institutional cultural projects such as museums (see Díaz Oruenta 2007 and Feinberg 2013). However, some of these collectives have continued or reappeared in other spaces of the city. To approach the *barrio* to find spaces requires negotiations, much patience and to comprehend that other collectives might also work under scarcity as we have seen in La Pértiga. In some places negotiations were only about getting a place to perform. As mentioned by Marcelo, when they do not find a place they rehearse in public parks or at Carlos' house. In other spaces, they had to negotiate a space to rehearse and perform. However, in most of the cases they only could use the space a few hours for a maximum of 3-4 days in a round, as they were also used by other cultural collectives or neighbours who make use of the space. Only on one occasion did Entrecalles get a full time space for a whole week for which they moved to another region, Extremadura, to 'find the multi-sited *barrio*'. This availability of a place full time/week in 'La Nave del Duende' in Casar de Cáceres is described by Carlos as being ideal if it was in Madrid. In the majority of the cases, as in 'La Nave del Duende', they arranged a performance for the neighbours after the time rehearsing.

The ways Entrecalles approached collectives were diverse. For instance, I went with Carlos to FERINE — the Association of Immigrants and Refugees in Spain— various times until he got to arrange the use of their space. The association was running with little staff, some of them volunteers. Although the association staff seemed very willing to lend them the space to rehearse and organise a performance for their *barrio* —Tetuán— it took a while until they could arrange everything. On other occasions some actors' friends lent spaces they owned in the times they were not working, which made Entrecalles work during the night. Other times, some collectives offered their spaces after seeing some of Entrecalles' performances. I also formed part of the process of searching for places. Juliana had been in charge of doing administration work for contacting organisations via email. She decided to go back to Argentina and Carlos asked me to help doing some of these tasks. I was asked to write an introductory letter to be sent to universities, where I noted the objectives of Entrecalles and the

proposal of the company to perform in non-conventional cultural spaces. This letter was sent to various universities, and only one replied. Since Entrecalles got no answer from my own university I offered myself to go to ask. When I did, I identified myself as a member of the theatre company. The answer I got from the person who attended me was: 'If you haven't got an answer yet, it must be because there's nothing to answer.' I insisted, but she, quite impolitely, provided the same answer. When I commented on this with the group, Lula and Carlos said that answers of this kind were not infrequent and that the best you could do in those situations was to 'smile, try to be nicer than them and insist'. Nevertheless, the majority of the times that Entrecalles searched for spaces in the *barrios*, answers were positive and quite enthusiastic. Vicissitudes arrived when trying to arrange a time that suited everyone: the space users and the actors. As well, at times this involved the *neighbours* getting used to identifying those non-conventional spaces as theatre ones. For instance, when Entrecalles performed in the Orcasitas neighbourhood association, the cleaner who worked there took off all the performance signs from the neighbourhood walls, since she thought 'it had to be a fake'. The association had a big and old space for performances that was not utilised, until their members decided to start to re-use this abandoned space. The play that re-opened the space was Entrecalles', but the cleaner seemed to disown it and the assistance to this performance was very small. Similarly, the assistance in La Pértiga association was low since it was a newly opened space that neighbours still did not know much about. Nevertheless, apart from these occasions, there was full audience assistance in their performances.

The symbolic 'nomadism' of Entrecalles searching for *a space* involves drawing up itineraries suggesting when and where to move about the city based on their previous experiences. In so doing, they have determined which parts of the city are more available for performances but also which areas are worth the time and energy. Michel De Certeau (1999) states that subjects of cities are active; they are continuously creating itineraries to move through, provoking transformation of neighbourhoods. De Certeau's use of structural oppositions to identify boundaries between places and transborder routes helps me explain how Entrecalles designs its itineraries, based on the division between *hot places*— those from which they have previously been rejected and *cold places*— those in which negotiations are usually fruitful. As I explained before, institutional spaces where they have less room to move have been considered as not worthy. Those spaces in the multi-sited *barrio*, where state rules are less present have given Entrecalles more chances to perform. This in turn comes to compensate for the lack of citizenship rights that, as Suárez explained (Suárez 2007), marks the situation of 'immigrants' displaced from the territory. It should not be concluded that social differences cannot be reproduced in the *barrio*, or as we have seen, that conflicts do not arise. However, these spaces invite more flexibility and negotiations than those where fixed rules are embedded. The Entrecalles detachment from the state, their creation of itineraries and their commitment with the multi-sited *barrio* in part resolves the paradox implicit in Andrew Gordon and Trevor Stack's analyses of 'creating citizenship beyond the State' (Gordon & Stack 2007). And, while confronting it, the paradox is that they are also resolving state and local gaps with respect to cultural access for lower classes in

Spain. Gordon and Stack's work offers various instances of collectives around the world who are claiming citizenship as an open set of elements wherein freedom is the most repeated claim. The authors understand that early modern citizenship suggests ways for people to 'take citizenship back from states'. However, they also point out, it still leaves a place for government through 'room to maneuver' (2007:117). This has been also evident in the way Entrecalles 'leaves a place for government' when they have crossed the limits of informality to work in the already mentioned FERINE, but also in some small funded festivals and other more 'formal' spaces such as universities, union centres and La Casa de Galicia in Madrid. Nevertheless, engagements with more institutionalised spaces have occurred in those which permitted 'the room to maneuver'. Because, as they agreed, they would only try to participate in those formal spaces where they could achieve equal representation and maintain their political attitude.

So far, we have seen the domain of the state impacting on public and private spaces, and the relevance of the multi-sited *barrio* to get rights back. Both relationships with the state and the *barrio* subjectively mark the group identity of the company. However, our understanding would be extremely incomplete if we did not to analyse their individual experiences when approaching to commodified industries. As I followed explain, this is conditioned by the postcolonial character of the representations of Latin Americans in the cultural industry. The intersection of the 'immigrant status' with 'racial, class and gendered' differences that were designed in the colonial past, are reproduced in the present in a complex manner wherein the body acts as a visual marker.



Board at La Pértiga association. Written: TODAY THEATRE. FREE ENTRY. "You add a value to the play according to what you can afford and your wishes." Free means Free [picture by Entrecalles]





Entrecalles members doing adjustments to the room before a performance at La Pértiga [picture by Entrecalles]



El Molino Rojo room in La Tabacalera squat where Entrecalles performed [picture by Entrecalles]



Entrecalles performance at El Molino Rojo, La Tabacalera [picture by Entrecalles]



El Campo de la Cebada squat space by neighbours at La Latina *barrio*. Before Entrecalles performance [picture by Entrecalles]





Ben praying before a performance at El Campo de la Cebada [picture by Entrecalles]



Kids making use of the space at El Campo de la Cebada [picture by Entrecalles]



Marcelo performing at the Agustín Lara square in Lavapiés in the play “Para Mercer una Estatua” (To deserve a statue) with “Ciclo Teatro” (Cycle-Theatre) group. He performed with Jose and Ben for this theatre group. He characterised the statue of the Mexican singer, actor and song-writer Agustín Lara which is placed there. Marcelo proudly played this role as he considered that although this author composed much recognised music about cities of Spain, nowadays he is not well acknowledged in Spanish society.

There can be seen also some neighbours of the Lavapiés *barrio* and other people who joined the performers when touring along various streets in Lavapiés and around [picture by Ciclo Teatro]

#### 4. Representation of Latin Americans in the performance industry: Mestizos, Mulattos and Indigenous roles

Before, my concern was to be an actor. But it was. . . It is complicated. It's here in Spain where I develop more my skills as a director, due to, as an actor I'm more limited here. I am always called to play trafficker or Indigenous loincloth roles. But in fact they are not going to call me because of my interpretation skills. So, that has led me to develop more my direction skills. [Carlos]

All of Entrecalles members are experienced and had studied acting before moving to Spain. Since they arrived to this country they have achieved different levels of success inside the Spanish cultural industry. Yet they have had analogous experiences to those of Carlos described above when playing roles in films and theatre plays, based on how racialised bodies of Latin Americans are incorporated in Spanish narratives. Roles of Latin Americans echo colonial ideas of *primitivism*, *authenticity* and *hybridity* which are correlated to old colonial categories of 'Indio' or 'Indigenous', 'Mestizos' and 'Mulattos'. The analysis of their experiences in the mediated industry will permit us to observe, as the work of Avtar Brah (2011) shows, that their position in this industry is responding to the intersection of class, race, gender and other markers such as linguistic, that articulate with capitalism and imperialism. These experiences will mark their identity as much as those which happened when approaching the institutionalised spaces and the multi-sited *barrio*. As Brah signals, there is a relationship between subjectivity and 'collective experience' to the extent that identity is both subjective and collective (cf. 43). Whereas Entrecalles was collectively experiencing segregation as a theatre company, individually members have also approached the mediated Spanish sectors to work as actors in which they have faced this articulation of postcolonial representation inside the capital market. Following Brah, these individual experiences will also merge into a shared 'collective experience' that defines the type of identity that is going to be embedded in Entrecalles. One of the main reasons why Entrecalles actors work in this company is because of the frustrations they have felt when working in many other theatre, film or TV-series projects, similar to that expressed by Carlos.

Before analysing this complexity, I will briefly situate in history the moment the racial categories of 'Indio', 'Mestizo' and 'Mulatto' appear in articulation with gendered and class differences. As Aníbal Quijano (2000b) signals, in pre-Columbian countries there were many different populations, with different histories, languages, identities and cultural elements who were simplified by the Spanish into a single racial entity: 'Indios'; later Indigenous. The anthropologist Verena Stolcke (2009) identifies the mid-sixteenth century as the moment in which 'Mestizos' appear as a social category, that segregated those born from Spanish and Indigenous parents, in a juridical and administrative way. Thus, Mestizo became a juridical-social category developed abreast an identity of people who had a lower status than Spanish but enjoyed more privileges than those classified as Indios, such as in

official and religious positions. However, after time their position worsened and they were considered suspicious of progeny with Africans. Children born from this union would be labelled under the category of ‘Mulatto’. In this social scale, Africans were seen and lived in the worst position; living under conditions of slavery; above them were the Indios who were seen as more assimilated to the Catholic religion. As Stolcke explains in the surge of ‘modern racism’ in the eighteenth century, colonies applied European ideologies that shifted from the religious emphasis of previous centuries to a phenotypical and culturally posterior differentiation. Yet in the Spanish colonies it did not apply so phenotypically, due to the fact that miscegenation was so widespread that the racial markers were unreliable evidence. It was the administrative registers from the sixteenth century of these racial categories that permitted the creation of racial distinctions resulting in the socio-political inequalities becoming legal.

This complex bureaucratic classification was also influenced by classicist divisions that existed in Spain — at that time Castilla Crown— and were extrapolated to the Americas, as the work of José María Arguedas proves (1968). In this research it is interesting to see how these categories were also reproduced in Spain once Africans and Aboriginal Americans were incorporated as segments of Spanish society. It is first necessary to explain here that Spain, perhaps in its attempt to prove itself as ‘another European country’ has ‘whitened’ its history by exalting historical narrations of ‘Christian heroes’ while neglecting the cultural and genetic influence in Spain of Subsaharan, Berber, Arab (more dominant in the southern areas<sup>9</sup>) and also Aboriginal American and Roma peoples. So that, there is an important gap in the literature about this cultural mixture in Spain. Studies of Fernando Ortiz and Esteban Mira Caballos fill the gaps and provide data which indicate that similar racial, gendered and social categories existed in the Iberian Peninsula during the Castilian colonisations. Fernando Ortiz shows that in fact the first Africans who were sent to the Americas to work as slaves were taken from Castilla where they already were treated as slaves and servants. These Africans also left a cultural influence in Spain, as is evident in the arts: in literature, theatre, flamenco music and others (Ortiz, 1986, 1981). Mira Caballos (2007) talks about the thousands of ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Mestizos’ who lived in the peninsula during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in diverse ways. Some arrived as slaves through Lisbon port or illegal trafficking; others were taken as exoticised objects to show in Castilla; and women were taken for domestic service or concubines. From 1542 slavery of the Indigenous became illegal which involved a decrease in their arrival. Mira Caballos argues that beside acquiring freedom the majority of them stayed in Spain —where a new generation had been born already— and remained as servants. In parallel, many ‘Mestizos’ were sent to Spain to be educated —assimilated— in Castilian schools and from 1524 the crown legalised the migration of those ‘Mestizos’ who were minors and travelled with their ‘Indigenous’ mothers to Castilla. These ‘Mestizos’ occupied different social positions, some of them having a high social status while those whose mothers had been slavish

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<sup>9</sup> See the documentary of “52 Minutos: Los últimos esclavos” (2016) that shows the existence of thousands of Sub-Saharan slaves in the southern region of Extremadura in Spain and their mixture with natives. The film exposes the voices and findings by the researchers Esteban Mira Caballos, Rocío Periañez, Lui Loureiro, Elena Morán, Juan Fco. Llano and Domingo Barbolla.

remained in a lower status. Meanwhile, thousands of Africans kept arriving until the 19th century, since slavery prohibition did not apply to them until 1837. The cultural mixture with Africans was accentuated through concubines and also free Catholic marriages, constituting the latter a way to get freedom from slavery.

What this picture is showing is a cultural journey wherein it is proved that the current relations of domination constituted by racist, gendered, class and other differences are not new, and that Spanish society has transculturated as much as colonised societies. Yet how these relationships come to the present needs to be explained in a contingent manner. In most contemporary postcolonial Spanish society, these categories overlap with discourses of immigration and juridical citizen status which in turn revive ideas of primitivism. These intersected categorisations have their representation in mediatised spheres. As I will show in chapter four, much of the colonial legacy on the representations of Latin Americans in the performance industry merges with what happens in the mass media. Here I will focus on the postcoloniality of the Spanish cultural industry and why this also has become an important reason for Entrecalles to produce alternative — *libre*— narratives and theatre.

Even after several weeks working with Entrecalles, I did not know that Carlos was a famous actor working on a Spanish TV-series I had never watched. His role in that series — “La que se avecina”— was as an ‘Indigenous Latin American sans-papiers immigrant’. His characterisation parodied a ‘poor’ Indigenous Colombian victim of his Spanish boss’s abuse because of his immigrant position and, significantly, illegality in the country. When I watched Carlos on the TV I saw a very different image to the person he is or he performs with Entrecalles. In the series he seemed subordinated, a victim; with a secondary voice. This ‘parody’ reminded me of a similar character in another very popular TV-series - “Aida”— in which there was a role of a Latin-American waiter unfairly named ‘Machu Picchu’. This actor is Spanish of Japanese background; but his physical appearance ‘fits’ the image of an Andean immigrant who lives illegally in the country and has no voice against his boss’ abuse. His boss represents an ultra-conservative Spanish man and the ‘Latin’ actor a passive subject who until a few seasons passed, almost does not utter a word of protest or even has not a real name. This last comedy-series has become very popular and the word ‘Machu Picchu’ has been extended in Spanish society, at times used to refer to Latin Americans with similar physical characteristics and status position. Although neither is Carlos a Colombian nor is Aida’s actor a Latin-American, both ‘embody’ homogenised and racialised roles with postcolonial echoes in the characterisation of an ‘Indio immigrant’ in Spain.

Carlos is the member of Entrecalles who has worked most in the performance industry. Other roles he has played in films and TV-series are “Colombian hired assassin”, “Latino trafficker”, “Indigenous” or roles in which he was just named as “the Indio” who maintained ancestral ‘authentic’ practices from some country of Latin America. When I left Spain on my way to Australia he was still playing these roles. On my return to Spain after 17 months Carlos was working in another TV-series —“Carlos, Rey

Emperador” — which is based on the life of one of the most powerful Spanish emperors from the earliest colonisation in America. He was playing one of the Aztecs who meet with Spanish colonizers in Mexico and are astonished by the Spanish ‘advanced’ technology. The majority of these narratives represent a ‘Spanish superiority’ over the colonized ‘Indio’ or ‘Latino immigrant’; who are marginalised, victimised or criminal. The complexity of these representations is to realise that they are made from a ‘Westernised and postcolonial eye’, that continues with colonial ideas of inferiorisation in which Latin Americans are seen suitable to play roles that fill the storyline of the main ‘superior’ Spanish roles. The repetition of these kinds of roles and narratives is what leads Carlos to say that ‘they are not going to call me because of my interpretation skills’. This is due to the correlation of his physical appearance with a series of ‘Latino profiles’ that respond to homogenised racial, gendered, sexual and class prototypes. Those roles that represent ‘the Indio’ are homogeneously reproduced and authenticated for any of the so named ‘Andean countries’, by using cultural and decorative elements such as flutes and other objects which cover up the bodies, such as feathers, fabrics, ponchos, necklets and earrings. Being Carlos of Quechua background, he is an amalgum of all the actors who most fit this physical description, despite, as he usually says: ‘I clearly look Peruvian, but I’m called to play Colombian, Mexican, ..., as if we [Latin Americans] looked all the same’. In other roles in which Indigeneity and authenticity were not predominant, his characterisation reproduced a sexualised role of *macho* who seduces someone, is trafficking or doing some other criminal action for his benefit.

The feelings of Carlos and the rest of the actors I talked with is that ‘they could do something else than these ‘Latino roles’. Yet this problematic worsens when the bodies of Latin American actors do not fit with the idea of the ‘Latino profile’. Apart from Carlos, the rest of the actors I talked with, expressed that it was more difficult for them to work in the Spanish industry precisely because they ‘don’t look Latinos’. For instance, Ari, a Colombian actress of Entrecalles expressed it as follows:

I tried to work in short-films in Spain, but they didn’t give me the job because of the Latino profile. Because I don’t have the Latin profile so marked,... So my agent told me: ‘I want to be your agent, because I love your work, but your physical [appearance] is a problem’. So, they [casting staff] didn’t want to give me the job, they didn’t want,... My agent worked with me for a while, but she couldn’t find anything and she quit it.

This kind of restriction to work in the ‘Latino profiles’ was a continued claim that I heard from all the Latin American actors inside and outside Entrecalles I talked with. Yet this view was also shared by some Spanish actors, as expressed for instance by Jose:

Ari has told me her stories. For example she’s told that her face is not [Latin] American: “You are not Black.” Fuck! There are many types in [Latin] America: white, black, green.. But they want an indigenous girl. And then later it has to be justified. In Spanish films, it must be justified why somebody is Argentinean for example. In other countries, they don’t do it: there is a Chinese with Polish accent in a group of people and nobody asks “where is this fellow coming from?” Why does this have to be explained? Then, how is it justified here? They are



*chachas*<sup>10</sup> or prostitutes. Is it not possible that she is a normal girl who is studying or working in an orthodox clinic, for example?

This form of classifying actors as ‘racialised and sexualised bodies’ can be explained by following bell hooks’ analysis of African communities in the U.S. media and film industries. She points at labelings which typecast some of them as ‘not black enough’ (bell hooks 2015:37) and classify them as Black or Brown in relation to their European background (2015:156). We can draw from her analysis and her influence on the work of Suki Ali (2004) to differentiate ‘visual codes’ reproduced in the media and performances that talk about bodies which are stereotypically classified inside neo-primitive conceptions of ‘Indigenous’; and those ‘Mestizos’ and ‘Mulattos’ —‘mixed’— positions that are ‘intelligible’; i.e. that ‘are impossible to articulate other than through the list of factors that include “race,” nationality, and kinship affiliations’ (Ali 2004: 84). Commodified performances tend to use Latin American roles as secondary characters, and these secondary characters are very limited to a series of physical characteristics. A majority of these roles in films require ‘recognisable’ bodies of ‘Mestizos’ and ‘Mulattos’ in roles which frequently represent them as criminals or victims. As I will further explain later, sex workers is one of the most extended images of Latin American women on mass media and similarly are represented in films. The blatant focus on these representations ignores other realities of Latin Americans in Spain, such as students, many diverse professions or simply second and third generations of Spanish from Latino backgrounds. These kinds of narratives continue maintaining a superior/inferior discourse in which Spanish appear as the main characters and Latinos as secondary ones who are ‘helped or accepted by the Spanish’ or commit some actions which affect the Spanish (see the analysis of TV-series on Ruiz Collantes et. al. 2006). In sum, ‘Latino’ characters are subordinated to Spanish ones.

Although Latin Americans have been described by some Spanish institutional voices as the ‘preferred immigrants’ due to a shared language and Catholic cultural influence, their roles in industry are lacking. As well, there is a tendency in Spain by which a ‘Black’, ‘Indigenous’, ‘Mestizo’, ‘Mulatto’ person ‘cannot’ play a Spanish role; which obviously ignores the multiculturalism that has existed in Spain for centuries and has augmented since the arrival of new incomers from the 90s. One of the options that these actors have in order to access the mainstream industry is to ‘whiten’ or ‘nationalise’ their bodies. In a meeting I had with Entrecalles members after my return from Australia, Marcelo showed us his Spanish National Card which he got while I was away. I found his accent changed, sounding closer to a Madrid one. Between jokes we told him that it was an effect of his Spanish I.D. card. Yet he replied that he wanted to ‘offer that accent’ to the industry which would permit him to get more jobs. At that time he was trying to get an Aztec role in the series ‘Carlos, Rey Emperador’ but — although he is Mexican— he did not fit the Mexican profile, or at least not as much as Carlos —being Peruvian— did for another Aztec role. So that one of the options that Marcelo and other actors find is

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<sup>10</sup> Way to say ‘maid’ in Spain, which usually has a pejorative character.

to ‘sound more Spanish’; a sound that, as I will further explain, is understood as homogeneous and ignores the diverse accents in the country by fostering that from the Madrid area.

The option to ‘offer that [Spanish] accent’ was also shared by Rodrigo. As he explained to me, when he started to look for jobs in Spain, he was told that his accent was unintelligible; so that, he assumed he should change it:

These people [filming staff] have determined the paths I have taken in my professional career. I’m more and more rooted in Spain. My partner is from here, so if I want to stay here I have to prove that I can make any role by erasing any Latin American accent. And my profile is not an easy one, because I’m Latin American, but not the ‘Latin American’ these people are searching for. I’m something in between. I’m not Spanish, but I sound Latin American,.. And here in Spain, there are not many narratives in which I can fit.

I stopped working with my agent because in three years she only got 3 TV-series for me. My roles were: leader of a band of Colombian traffickers in the “Hospital Central” series; a similar one in the series “Barco”, and in the other one I was a Colombian businessman who was kidnapped. Then, that’s my profile, because I can’t do the “Machu Picchu” of the series “Aida” for example. So, if I have to erase the Chilean accent to be able to work in this country, I’ll do it.

To some extent, all these representations of ‘Latin’, ‘Indigenous’, ‘Mestizos’ and ‘Mulattos’ create an illusionary whitening of Spanish ones. The presence of stereotypised ‘inferior’ subjects which display marginality, authenticity of neo-primitive Indigenous and racialised bodies ‘boosts’ Olive Spanish bodies to the ‘superior’ level of Northern European countries and reduces inferiority complexes on the Spanish side. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton explain the centrality of ‘raced, sexed, classed and ethnicised’ bodies as sites where imperial and colonial power are imagined and exercised (Ballantyne and Burton 2005:6). In many senses, this is a clear updating of primitivism, in which the professionalism of these actors is relegated in favour of their racial-physical characteristics in conjunction with their gender and ethnicity. As the work of Fernando Ortiz shows with his study of Africans in Spain and Cuba, although actors as Africans in history have proved to be able to perform a big range of different roles, they have been pigeonholed in stereotyped and inferiorised ones (Ortiz 1981: 586). As he suggests, it depends on the script writers, which I will extend here to directors and perhaps the audience, to reflect other kinds of narratives in which ‘dark bodies’ can play any role and work in similar conditions.

To be a ‘Latino actor’ in this context involves a subjectivity in relation to this lack of professional recognition and racial, gendered and sexualised differentiations of subjects who belong to different nations and backgrounds but share a postcolonial immigrant position as ‘Latin Americans’. The work of Brah shows that it is necessary to understand all the ways that the dynamics of power conjunct into racist, gendered, classed and other labelling forms, since they produce subjectivities. How their

differences are worked is crucial to understand how a collective identity is formed as a political process ‘in and of the subjectivity’ (Brah 2011:153), in which multiple fragments are articulated as a *collage*. In these contexts in which, as Carlos told me, he saw himself for first time as a ‘Latino’ working in ‘Latino roles’, racial, gendered, linguistic and other differences mark their positions and their subjectivities. As Brah explains, in the process of the significance of shared experiences in relation to some of those differential labels, the collective identity gets a particular meaning. So far, my attempt has been to show the ways that their experiences as ‘postcolonial immigrants’, as ‘neighbours’ and as ‘racialised and sexualised bodies’ have marked their subjectivities and how they have been articulated into a common counter hegemonic project, which is Entrecalles, and with a shared ‘Latina’ identity. For the last part of this chapter I will examine the articulation of this identity with non-Latin American actors, with whom they share differential labels.

## 5. A manifesto against the stereotypisation of African and Latin American roles

In this last part of the chapter I discuss two forms of coherence between Latin American actors of Entrecalles and African actors. Firstly, it happens when Entrecalles actors meet with Subsaharan actors in the spaces of the *barrio* and in those of the commodified market, wherein they think about writing a manifesto together against the stereotypisation of Latin American and African roles. Secondly, it happens with the incorporation of Moroccan actors into Entrecalles; a group that, initially described itself as Latin American, but gradually has been incorporating actors from other countries. What these two instances are going to show is that articulation can happen in specific conjunctures, but they need an ideological link that enables its articulation into a shared political identity. As Stuart Halls explains, if we are going to focus on a theory of articulation we should both contemplate how ‘ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse’, and ‘how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures’ (Hall 1986:53). Consequently, although these articulated identities are versatile, their achievement is not a process that comes by itself by just labeling a group in a specific way. Rather, it is a more complex process in which they must meet multiple subjectivities marked by diverse racist, gendered, sexualised and other differences.

Carlos told me about the manifesto between African and Latin American actors when telling me about meetings with them in the spaces of the *barrio*. He facilitated me to contact with Sari, a Spanish and Equatorial Guinean actress, who has been living in Spain since 1992. We arranged an interview in Lavapiés *barrio*. When we met she quickly asked me what kind of person I was expecting and what did I think about her accent on the phone. I admitted that her accent did not sound “African” to me and I did not know what to expect. ‘I know. Many people in Spain don’t even know that Equatorial Guinea was a Spanish colony and that we speak Spanish’. Equatorial Guinea is one of the ‘forgotten’ ex-colonies, even more than the other non-Latin American ex-colonies. Yet on that day and in other meetings that followed, she professed an African identity above her postcoloniality between Equatorial

Guinea and Spain. What she exposed during the hours we were talking had many similitudes with the concerns of the Latin American actors I had talked with, yet now from a 'Black' or 'African' identity:

My roles are: prostitute or marginalised or the girlfriend of someone who accepts me as "I am"; i.e. Black, prostitute and marginalised! (laughs). In any case, if I play a role away from that ambit, there is always a need inside the industry to justify why I am there. I.e. if I played a role of a receptionist in a film, very probably the script would include a justification of why that Black woman has managed to reach receptionist.

As well, she expressed boredom about acting in stereotyped roles, which have lead her and other African actors in Spain to found an association of Afro-descendent actors:

Every time that I met with actors of the Black race,... even actors from other countries... I talk about the Black race because their problematic is what I know, but in the end, we all deal with the same. So the idea of the association surged because every time that Afro-descendent actors met, we realised that we have the same problem. Although, there are even differences between being a Black actor and a Black actress. They have a bit wider varieties than Black women. For example: a Black actor can play a doorman and that's not a "humiliating role". I don't consider that all the prostitute roles that I have played have degraded me. Any of those roles were focused on the fact that I was prostitute. But that was the role.

In the majority of films or works I have done I've had to project an accent. As you can see I have a neutral Spanish accent. In all the works I have had to project a foreign accent; African. Because they are 'selling' a girl without resources who is prostitute. A girl who doesn't have resources and is a prostitute cannot talk properly, as I do!

Roles of 'sex workers' are usually represented by women or transgender persons whose bodies are sexualised in a racial way. It is important to note here the postcolonialism and the correlation of gender and sexuality with racism in these kinds of representations of African and Latin American women. The work of Lourdes Méndez that focuses on how sexual bodies are embedded into artistic productions, shows that the subjectivity of individuals is constituted by their ethnicity and class as much as by the binomial sex/gender (2004:126). The representation of 'sex worker' roles, constitutes not only a gendered differentiation but also sexualised one that acts in conjunction with racist and colonial representations. The problem here is not only that the chances she has to work in the cultural industry are focused on this sexualised representation, but also that it corresponds to an old-colonial representation of sexualised body of African and Latin American women. As Brah explains, racism is always sexualised and gendered, to the extent that racism constructs the female gender differently to the male one; but also, importantly, it is differentiated between women from different backgrounds in a specific context.

Since all the mediated constructions contribute to the formation in the social imaginary of prototypes, it constitutes an element of concern for Sari that goes further than her chances to find a job:

Films are fiction, right? But it is also a reflect of the reality. I mean, citizens, when they watch that on the TV they think that a Black woman can only be a prostitute and a Black man can only be a pimp or a club doorman. But the TV reflects that because in part the society also believe it. So, one thing feeds the other. And that's an image that to me it is not reflecting the reality at all.

Subjectively this marked the desire of Sari and other Guinean and Africans actors to found the association of Afro-descendent artists. And as well to publicise that their possibilities to work in the industry are marked by this racialisation:

We formed this association with two objectives: 1) To announce this problem; 2) And specially to have equal opportunities for films and TV-series. [...] Why can't I be the neighbour and the main character of a film without justifying that I'm the neighbour if we all have a neighbour from South America or Nigeria or Morocco? There's no need to justify it, because that's the reality of the society. We're saying this even to our friends, colleagues, professionals and we're not declaring war to anyone. [...]

I am not naïve. I perfectly understand that they don't give me the job if they want to have a German family or Scandinavian in a series. But even though, I would say, why not? [...] There's been a massive exodus also from the UK to U.S. because Black actors don't get main characters. And one of them has got a main role to play a classic king, who was White. He's a very dark skinned Black. And the U.S. industry critic and audience praised his work. So that the people almost forgot that the actor who played the king was Black.

One of the policies of the association says that its members have to have performative and artistic background; to be professionals. We're not asking for charity! We're asking for a recognition of the work of people from other countries and races. It's not about charity; it's about justice and respect.

Although 'African roles' can be different in relation to some narratives, they commonly share secondary, pejorative and un-voiced positions with 'Latinos' ones. These similarities are what led Carlos and Sari to talk about writing a manifesto together; as both explained me:

Carlos: We wanted everyone in the industry to sign the manifesto. The manifesto would say that the roles of Africans and Latino Americans are very marked by the phenotypes we have. That there's a discrimination there. But we didn't do it in the end. Now there're a group of African actors who want to do it. But we had that idea too. And I've told them that it'd be better if we do it together; to get stronger.

Then, I asked Sari about why the manifesto was not done in the end:

It is true that there's a nexus between us, but I have never been called to play Aboriginal. I don't know how they feel when they're called to play Aboriginal roles when you're living here for 800 years; or when you can do many other things. So, that makes me feel that I don't

have the capacity to empathize with that specific problem. And I think it's very important to be able to empathize with your association fellows. And that's why we decided to do the Afro-descendent association. This doesn't mean at all that in the future we cannot meet with Latin Americans and work on common issues. Because I'm sure there are many.

Despite Equatorial Guinea being a former Spanish colony and so providing some similarities with Latin Americans, Sari felt stronger identification with African actors, in part marked by the roles she plays as 'African'. Aboriginal or Indigenous representations as 'Machu-Picchu' are not correlated to Equatorial Guinean in Spain; either because Equatorial Guinea is the 'forgotten ex-colony' or because this country is more associated in the social imaginary within Subsaharan countries. Roles of 'Mestizos' or 'Mulattos' who belong to a low social class and are victimised or criminalised are those roles more related to the narratives in which African actors play. What this is telling us is that, beside the similarities that might arise in these representations, it is important to note that, as Avtar Brah signals, in European contemporary societies there are different racisms living together, which operate articulately with many differential markers in diverse ways (Brah 2011: 122). Furthermore, as said before, a linking is needed to a political identity in order to be articulated. The work of Avtar Brah has shown how in the specific context of the U.K. Africans and South-Asians articulated a political identity under the link of 'Black peoples'. As she clearly explains, this is conditioned by the fact that both groups have been labeled in racist discourses as Black. However, in Spain there would not be such a correlation of understanding Latin Americans and Africans as 'Black' and the concept of 'immigrant' or 'inferiorised immigrant' would be the one that could act as a contingent sign. This presents some differentiation since the racist history of Africans and Latin Americans in Spain is labelled differently. Furthermore, as the process of articulating political identities requires some identities to be lost or relegated to the background, this can be problematic when the separate articulation of Latin American and African identities on their own is still to be consolidated. Nevertheless, African and Latin American artists keep meeting in the *barrio* and engaging in different project.<sup>11</sup> Whether in the future they can articulate a political identity together is uncertain but it would not be naïve to expect that it will happen, since ideological elements in both groups are cohering together. Furthermore, articulations are subjected to continuous disarticulations and re-articulations. As Stuart Hall explains,

an articulation can make a unity of two different elements under certain conditions, which is not determined, absolute and essential for all time. [...] The popular force of an organic ideology always depends upon the social groups that can be articulated to and by it. It is here that one must locate the articulating principle. But I want to think of that connection not as necessarily given in social-economic structures or positions, but precisely as the result of an articulation (Hall 1986:55).

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<sup>11</sup> See for instance the work of Carlos with the Senegalese actors Ibrahima Diop, Badara Bam and Leah Katheu in "Un millón de sandías" (Alcalde 2015); and the work of Marcelo with the Equatorial Guinean hip-hop singer Derico Classic (Derico Classic 2015)

A good instance in this sense is how Entrecalles has been gradually incorporating African and Spanish actors into the company. Although the company is identified by its founder, Carlos, as *Latin American* and has had a preference to work with Latin Americans, he has shown himself very open to including other backgrounds. He argued that he wanted to include a representation of all the ‘races’ in the company. So Carlos looked for that, but it also looked for actors who shared a political attitude and commitment to the company. This has been attracting people such as Ben. Ben joined the group when Carlos was contacting African and Afro-Latino actors since he wanted to include ‘Black’ actors in the company. The person who was to play the role, an Afro-Cuban actress, could not make it in the end. So Carlos decided to include an African perspective in the play through a Moroccan actor. Beside the artistic interest that Ben had to perform in Entrecalles, he quickly showed similar concerns:

We, Moroccan actors, are not considered actors. The “industry” is a world of rednecks. Yeah! The Spanish film world, the way that they treat immigrants,..., they are authentic rednecks. Because films and TV don’t reflect the reality. Unless you are Cuban or Argentinean,..., because of their trajectory. But an African, a Moroccan, an Algerian, are not seen as actors; they see us as cheap labor. For example, a film that talks about a Moroccan or Algerian, they don’t contract us! They contract Spanish with Arabic phenotypes. And if they have to speak Arabic, they translate the phonetic into Latin words and they learn it. Instead of working with us. They don’t trust us and our work is to show them the contrary. We’re showing it and there’s no job for us. They just call us to play trafficker, terrorist or abuser. I’d like to see for example a film which talks about friends, d’you know? You don’t see any Spanish who has a foreign friend in a film. Maybe they put a Black person in the last line of a bar. There are really good actors! For example, the series ‘Toledo’,<sup>12</sup> there’s no Moroccan actor working. They put blond, pretty women with straight blond hair who play Moroccans.

As in the words of Ben, the term ‘immigrant’ is what makes him, as other actors in Entrecalles, to experience his position in Spanish society in a racialised way. The ‘immigrant’ link is what permits the group to articulate their shared interests. As well, the political attitude of the Spanish actors, Jose and Lula who manifested disagreement with forms of discrimination towards ‘immigrants’, is what make them cohere together with Entrecalles political identity. Given the situation I have been describing, we can see all these processes of articulation, growing but, necessary for a shared political identity that searches for cultural change. While searching for that cultural change, the options for these actors to work in the cultural industry involve accepting stereotyped roles that pigeonhole them, because, we should not forget, they are professional artists willing to find room in the Spanish cultural sectors. So, somehow they need to find ways to professionally survive while maintaining that attitude. One of the pathways that Ben and other Latin American and African actors have to find roles in Madrid has been through an agency called ‘Derazas’. It is through this agency that Ben got his first roles in Spain:

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Toledo, cruce de destinos’ was a TV-series which reproduced the times of fight between Christians and Muslims to control the Iberian Peninsula in the 13th century.

A friend of mine called me. In 2005. She had a friend who had an agency of “actors of race”. When they want a Black, Hindu or Moroccan, they call it ‘actors of race’. Like purebred dogs (laughs). In fact, the agency is called ‘Derazas’ (Ofraces) or so.

There were more actors who mentioned they worked through this agency as well. The most outstanding fact is not that there exist such an agency trying to facilitate jobs for people of different backgrounds, but that these actors are so racially differentiated inside the Spanish cultural industry and that this is such a determinate element for their participation in artistic projects. All this is describing a context in which the professionalism of these actors is relegated to second grade importance. Perhaps, the most ironic aspect is that all of them are still seen in a racial way as ‘immigrants’ despite living in Spain for a long time. In this sense it is important to remember that when saying ‘immigrant’ the concept is applied to those coming from former colonies, as well as countries considered ‘inferior’, as Verena Stolke signaled. As Arlene Dávila explains (2001) these renditions are framed within dominant conventions which invalidate or burden Latin Americans and Africans as ‘immigrants’ instead of an incorporated segment of Spanish society. An approach which understands postcolonial relations, the urban planning of the city and the reach of the institutional domain along with the neoliberal city has been necessary to make visible their claims. Although they are hidden in the commodified culture, they gain visibility and empowerment in the margins of the *barrio*.



### Chapter 3: De-colonising bodies and narratives from the margins

#### 1. 'El Polvo de mis Huesos': The endless play. Actors playing themselves

Whereas in the last chapter the analysis focused on how a political identity is articulated in the spaces of the *barrio* as a response to their position of inequality in institutional and commodified artistic spheres, for this chapter the focus will be on seeing the processes of subjectification during rehearsals and performances. It will enable seeing how the members of Entrecalles manifest their subjectivities and how these get embedded in the meanings of the plays and performances. These processes show their attempt to decolonise the stereotyped meanings that have been given to their bodies in the narratives of the dominant representations, through counter-narratives and corporeal, linguistic and musical elements that they employ to build their roles. Different from other recorded arts, theatre expresses and shows something different in each performance, and this is evident in the Entrecalles performances. Yet as well, the methods utilised in Entrecalles to work allow a wide subjectification in their works. Since Carlos fosters the idea that actors build their own roles by personifying them, their plays are in a continual process of readjustment as much due to the subjectivities of the actors as to the changes of actors. This makes their plays likely to be in an endless process of continued transformation, because the actors, somehow, are 'playing themselves'. After all, as May Karen Dahl states in her analysis of the postcolonialism in British theatre, 'performing, like writing, embodies subjectivities' (1995:47); and subjectivities are in continual transformation.

During the time I spent with the company, they were working on two plays: 'Moscas y Milagritos' — 'Flies and Little-Miracles' — and 'El Polvo de mis Huesos' — 'Dust of my bones'. As I explained in the previous chapter, the first play was stopped soon after I joined the company, so I could better witness the process of transformation during the rehearsals and performances of the play 'El Polvo de mis Huesos'. However, the methods employed in both plays were similar. As I aim to show, these methods require a break with a series of rigid conceptions on the way to organise theatre productions that have been so extensively discussed by dramaturges such as Augusto Boal (2008) and Eugenio Barba (2005). Following these authors' guidelines, Carlos gives actors freedom to build their character. As director and main scriptwriter, he marks the directions of the play and the rehearsals, yet he employs a sort of horizontality which fosters actors' contributions. Furthermore, these processes of subjectification permit a break with the predominant stereotyped representations of commodified artistic productions, by decolonising their bodies and offering counter-narratives. Carlos' methodology is admittedly influenced by Eugenio Barba's work. Barba describes practitioners performance as dualised in two poles ('North' and 'South'). As he describes them, the 'North pole' would be that which is full of rules and principles marked by the director and the context in which a play is executed. In the 'South pole', actors themselves give a value, a personal interpretation to the

characters and — through the connection with the spectator— a meaning is produced. (2005:13). Further, Barba describes the ‘South pole’ as apparently free but with greater difficulty to achieve. Although some of these ideas perpetuate a form of dualism which polarises the world (see critics to Barba’s view in Stone Peters 1995), we will see that the characteristics attributed to the ‘South Pole’ are those that describe the atmosphere in which Entrecalles develop their plays.

In general, Carlos wants that all who get involved with Entrecalles to leave a personal hallmark on it. He used to repeat: ‘I always think that ten minds working together do more than one’. As I explained before, when I joined Entrecalles they were looking for an anthropologist or historian volunteer, since they were in the process of re-writing the script of ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’. Although much of my volunteering with them was about taking pictures and generally helping during their performances and rehearsals, Carlos encouraged me to read this script and provide my opinion. This play talks about forms of racial discrimination, the old origins of multiculturalism in Spain, the history of Spanish colonisation in Latin America and migratory movements between these two geographical poles, up to the most contemporary arrival of Latin Americans in Spain. So he wanted some “academic” to read the script to avoid ‘someone who sees the play and says some data is wrong’. An ‘academic supervision’ was absolutely unnecessary. Carlos and other actors had been reading extensively about these historical moments, and most important, they had used their own experiences to re-design the script. Yet he continually encouraged me to give my personal opinion about the script; a difficult task to combine with a non-contamination of the subject study by the anthropologist. Yet the rest of the members of Entrecalles contributed to re-writing the script. All of us had a copy of the script that we took home. During the meetings to rehearse Carlos announced new sentences or adjustments from the last meeting, while frequently actors proposed the introduction of new sentences. The proposals were discussed among the members, and at times the discussions became emotional. The proposals were not necessarily always agreed by all of them. The trick when troubleshooting some disagreements was in finding a solution that could satisfy all. In one of their rehearsals Carlos proposed introducing a short dialogue at the beginning of the script: “*Who are they that write the History?*”, “*The Western World!*” The sentence serves to criticise the ways that the voices of the dominated have been excluded in the historical narrations, a perspective so extensively discussed by Black Power, Indigenous scholars and collectives, postcolonial theorists and Black, Chicana, postcolonial and other feminisms. In this rehearsal, María and Juliana got involved in a big discussion, since María considered it unnecessary to include that sentence, while Juliana celebrated with enthusiasm Carlos’ new idea. After a long discussion, they decided that all the actors would ask at once: ‘*Who are they that write the history?*’, and Juliana would answer by herself but with emphasis: ‘*The Western world!*’.

As the studies about art practices show, there is a powerful value in artistic expressions which, as Marián López points, offer a pathways to indulge our feelings, ideas, emotions and reflexions (2011:149). It seems evident that not all the members of Entrecalles are going to converge regarding the personification of their roles, but their subjectivities must live together inside the group if a

*convivencia* is desired. This might involve, as the theory of articulation explains, at times some subjectivities and identities being relegated and the articulated identity suffering continuing processes of dis-articulation and re-articulation. Yet it is this very quality that makes Entrecalles projects collective. Furthermore, as I have been arguing, it made it possible for non-Latin Americans to hook inside a ‘Latin American’ company. In this regard, Ben also left a legacy on the script by suggesting that Carlos alter some of the sentences of the scene which narrates the Muslim invasions of Spain in the Medieval era. Due to the increased international homogenised criminalisation of Islamic peoples from the 9/11 in New York —that was augmented in Spain after the terrorist attacks in the so named 11/M in Madrid in 2004— Ben wanted to introduce a dialogue that breaks with such homogenisation of Arabic peoples. And if we remember, this is one of the roles that Ben thought was stereotyped. So that, a dialogue that originally did not exist in the script, was incorporated, as Ben explains:

What I like most from Carlos is that if you do something good he will let you do it. I told him ‘Why don’t we change the text and include a couple of lines?’ And now I say: “There exist Arabs, but not all the Arabs are the same,.. They are Muslims; but there are Muslims who are Asiatic. For example, my father was Egypt and Muslim and he got married to a woman who was half Persian, half Berber. She was Muslim, but Shiite. My great grandfather was Phoenician, but not Muslim and he married a Libyan woman, and her father was Romanian. [...] And my aunt Nahima is Arab but not Muslim. She now professes Christianity!”

My character is a mate who is lost, d’you know? He says: ‘Tolerance, brothers. Freedom of worship!’ So the character is lost, d’you know? He’s like a real Arab (laughs).

Contrary to the last instance, this modification of the script was accepted by all the members of the group without objections, thus facilitating room for Ben to express by himself what he desired. So that a scene that originally was made to represent the historical moment in which Arabs, Berbers and Christians were disputing the territory of Spain signaling religious persecution by Christians, it incorporated elements that broke with two stereotypisations: 1) Past and present homogeneous representations of Arabs as Islamic extremists and terrorists; 2) The belief that the Koran is not a permissive book. In this scene, Ben — in the Arabic role— is protecting Jose — in the Jew role— from Christian persecutions, showing that permissiveness. There are more instances that will follow which show Ben finding room to express his subjectivities. Yet it is interesting here to explain that the chance to leave a mark on the script provided him a reinforcement inside the company. This was strengthened when Zora, Spanish actress of Moroccan background, joined the group. Juliana left the group to go back to Argentina and Ben helped Carlos to meet Zora, who would be selected as Juliana’s replacement. Thus the presence of Zora became an important symbolic reinforcement for Ben inside a group that had initially constructed an artistic project around a ‘Latin American identity’.

The transformation of the script such as this one by Ben reflects the re-articulation that was being produced inside the company. The first play’s script was written by Carlos, who, as main and first script-writer and director of the company, is the initial person projecting his personal experiences,

thoughts and emotions onto the plays. To this first version are added the ones of the actors and other members of the company. 'El Polvo de mis Huesos' play aims to show that the History of Humanity is full of continual migratory movements and hence makes a claim against modern racist and other forms of exclusion of 'Latin Americans' in Spain. However, this play has also a postcolonial perspective focused on the colonial and postcolonial relationships between Latin American countries and Spain, that is due to the taste given in the first script version by Carlos:

Spain is like the essence of many *mestizajes* —mixtures— right? I thought that that was interesting; to talk about all the societies which have passed by Spain: Muslims, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Celts,.. But also because I'm Peruvian and I felt,.. I have to talk in the plays about stories which are related to myself. And I'm living in Spain and Spain has also been part of my life in Peru. And it was also perfect because of what's happening here with Latinos.

Thus, this play, as the majority of Entrecalles plays, starts with Carlos' subjectivities, who also works as an actor in all his plays and projects a personification on his own roles while 'leaving' actors to work on their own. In spite of all the transformations that the play has, the main objectives of the script, this is, to articulate and disassemble the premises of racial discriminations and denounce the postcolonial position of Latin Americans in Spain, remain in the text. This is due to Carlos 'protecting' those narratives that are more significant for what he aims to project, such as:

- 1) 'Border scene': The scene represents border controls, depicting the oppressor in a comic situation in which the oppression turns on themselves. It is represented in the context of the Old Roman Empire, wherein a Roman soldier is guarding the border while a Libyan merchant tries to enter into Rome. The soldier does not let the Libyan get in because he has no passport. The soldier's wife — also Libyan— appears pregnant in the scene. She approaches the merchant who happens to be her relative. They recognise each other and she crosses the border to greet him. Once she is on the other side of the border she has the baby. The Roman father remains unhappy about the birth of his baby outside Roman borders. Finally, the soldier decides to open the border and let three of them in.
- 2) 'Bearded scene': This scene represents forms of discrimination based on physical differences which create a parallel with the racial differentiations that are used to limit a national-territorial belonging. A man without a beard is in the centre of the room. Around him, forming a circle, there are bearded men who look at him wondering if he is ill inasmuch as he has no beard. The bearded men have founded a fundamentalist group which exclude those who are not bearded. The non-bearded man claims: 'I'm from here!'
- 3) 'Columbus scene': The scene represents the beginnings of the Castilian colonisation of the Americas. Columbus, a priest and a soldier arrive in America. Carlos, who sees them arriving advises Lula —who also characterises an Indigenous role: 'Look at the first dinghy of history [arriving]'

The play continues doing a chronological tour of history until arriving at the most contemporary part of history in Spain. The fact that the the same actors are playing diverse roles creates a correlation of meanings between these three scenes — specially the Columbus one, and the last two scenes:

- 1) ‘Spanish refugee scenes’: During the Franco dictatorship in Spain, Jose —Spanish — characterises a Spanish refugee who lives in Russia; and María— Mexican— interprets a Spanish refugee living in Mexico who feel homesick and disoriented in the country that is welcoming her. When both enter the room they are holding a suitcase that Jose leaves on the floor.
- 2) ‘Last scene’: Carlos enters the room and takes the suitcase that Jose left. He represents a Latin American ‘immigrant’ who takes a flight to arrive to Spain at the end of the 20th century. The rest of the actors who were in the previous scenes: the Spanish refugees, the Arab, the Roman, look at him and march together.

This last staging that represents the Latin American migration to Spain creates a parallel between different moments of history that ‘justifies’ their presence in the country. Furthermore, it evokes a deeper postcolonial meaning insofar as the previous scenes represented the colonisation in the Americas and the Spanish immigration to Latin America. These are the meanings that Carlos wanted to project in the play, that not necessarily have to be shared by all of the members of Entrecalles. In an attempt to find out which roles each actor identified with most, I asked them which part-s of the play they liked most. Ben without hesitation chose the one in which he had changed the sentences for the Arab role. ‘I love the Arab role’, he told me. However, the majority of the Latin American members chose those scenes that talked about the relationships between Latin Americans and Spanish. Specifically, Nico — the Argentinean technician of Entrecalles— interpreted the significance of these scenes:

Until the last scene you don’t realise that they are talking all the time about immigrations and that people are moving all the time from one place to other; and somehow roles repeat. Probably Marcelo’s roles are chasing Ben’s ones all the time. And it is in the last scene when you see the immigration in Spain; i.e. somehow it is reminding you that there are many Latin Americans arriving. But also that millions of Spanish who for years, both in the colonial period or more recently during the Civil War went to [Latin] America. And they got integrated without problems. But when one comes here or *comes back* as an immigrant, it clashes. Not everyone remembers that people who are *coming back* to Spain are doing it in the same way that Spanish went there: they just don’t have jobs, are escaping from wars, etc. This is a kind of “retaliation” from our point of view. In fact, Carlos clearly looks Latin American,.. So, this is a way to say: ‘We are here’.

Similar to the motto that African peoples living in the U.K. have been using, this is ‘We are here because you were there’, Nico interprets these correlated scenes as a way to claim ‘a right to be in Spain’. Similarly, Miguel, the Chilean filmmaker volunteer at Entrecalles, chose the scene that represents a Spanish refugee in Mexico:

I think Jose makes a great role as the Russian. But I like very much the Mexican part,.. Cos also María is Mexican, and she is playing a Spanish refugee in Mexico. I think that's a counterpoint. I like it very much because is a close subject. We're Latinos and the Spanish immigration to Latin America is huge.

It is significant that when María left the country to go back to Mexico nobody took this role and this scene was deleted. Carlos tried to replace her in that scene with other actors, but he did not seem accordant with the way that they interpreted it, and eventually the scene was deleted. The extended opinion of the group was that Maria played that part very well, and that nobody got to connect with that role as she did. María left Spain soon after I joined the group, so that I did not get to know the meanings that this role had for her. Yet the general desire between Latin American members of Entrecalles was to return to that scene, that had become so symbolic for explaining their position in Spain. If this scene was resumed, one of the most important meanings of the play, this is 'We are here, because you were there', would be reinforced. It is significant as well that when I asked Jose about his favourite scene, he instead signaled the one of the Spanish refugee in Russia:

The last scenes are very beautiful, very poetic. The things about the [Spanish] Civil War are very touching for me. I didn't experience anything myself; nobody in my family..., any of my grandparents were murdered. Although my grandfather was a victim of reprisals. But I haven't directly suffered anything myself. But when you see the images that are projected at the end of the play, wherein people [Spanish refugees] are leaving, crossing the border with France,.. That's very touching for me. I'd like to put more of myself in that part. I don't know if I put enough of myself. Because all that part at the end is very beautiful. When Carlos appears and then all of us walk with him,.., it's very beautiful. I like most all this dramatical part of the play.

The luggage that Jose holds when enters into the scene and that he puts on the floor when he leaves is a visual resource that intensifies the parallelism when Carlos takes it. The emotions that actors have been projecting in the construction of their characters look for an empathy with the audience through that parallelism between a 'Spanish immigrant' and a 'Latin American immigrant'. As I mentioned in the last chapter, the audience was predominantly Spanish and Latin American, with also the support of Ben's Moroccan friends. Sometimes the audience was more predominantly formed by neighbours of working class areas and other times, there was a mixture of university students, Entrecalles friends, drama followers and members of social collectives. As well, there was a wide range of age, from kids to elders, and a proportioned representation of men and women. Since the spaces where these plays have been performed are varied, this has facilitated the meanings of the play reaching different social groups. In the faces and reactions of the audience during their performance I could witness the shock that the parallelism of the past and contemporaneous migrations produced. For instance, a day in which there was a group of elders in the audience, one of them got very touched by the scene of the Spanish in Russia and he sporadically clapped strongly by himself. Another day, Latin American

members of the audience laughed with prominent emphasis when the Columbus arrival at the Americas was described as the ‘first dinghy in history’. Members of diverse audiences I had the chance to talk with after performances assured me they had received an unexpected impact at the end of the play when Carlos took the suitcase left by Jose.

The Entrecalles method that attempts to project the subjectivities of the actors into their characters gets a reward for the artistic and symbolic value that the performance acquire. Through the personification of the characters, actors have projected, and talked about their experiences in social conflicts. The already mentioned work of Sonia Cajade highlights the high emotional impact that theatre has through the transmission of values. Through a game of identification with the characters, an important mechanism of empathy is formed. This is the attempt of ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ play; to create an empathy with the audience, specially directed towards the Spanish audience through the figure of Spanish refugees and Latin Americans in Spain. In spite of ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ being a comedy, these last scenes have a dramatic sense, which produces an abrupt change that grabs the attention. Yet it is at the end of the play, when the ‘Latin American immigrant’ arriving in Spain appears, when this empathy acquires its full meaning and tells about contemporaneous social conflicts. The Cajade’s perspective, influenced by Victor Turner’s work that analyses the relationship between ‘ritual’ and ‘theatre’, is pertinent here to see how social conflicts reflect in theatre. Turner defines ‘ritual’ as a social drama, in which the whole community embraces a collective crisis and proposes a solution. For Turner, the major genres of cultural performances and narrations originate in this social drama, and also continue to draw meanings and force from this social drama (Cajade 1987:30). Cajade applies this account to understand how in theatre, the conflicts that are represented between the characters are also internal conflicts for those who interpret them (Cajade 2009:19). She concludes that contemporaneous theatre can be seen as a ‘liminal space’ specially suitable to create new meanings and values, which dispute the legitimised system, acting as a ‘communitas’ —in the Turner sense— to create new forms of action before social problems (2009: 21-22). The audience then, plays an important role as a receptor of those messages. As in a ‘communitas’, Entrecalles interprets social problems and colonial legacies for the *barrio* and it is in the hands of each of them to look for solutions.

As we have seen, performance methods utilised by Entrecalles are along similar lines to those explained by Cajade, that she sees as characteristic of ‘alternative’, ‘counter-hegemonic’ theatre. Eugenio Barba sited these characteristics in the theatre of the ‘South Pole’. For the Entrecalles case, I would like to stress that they find the possibilities to employ this methodology in the *margins* of the *barrio*. Whereas in the commodified circuits they are pigeonholed into prototypes with which they disagree, the project that Entrecalles presents in the *margins* of the *barrio* permits them to break with those prototypes, to expose the feelings that those representations provoke in them and to build other narratives. I am referring to *margins* not solely as a place to which subjects or ethnic groups are displaced by a series of intersectional oppressions. Rather as well, I am identifying *margins* as those spaces of the city in the *barrio* which are diaphanous to counter-narratives and de-colonialised bodies

and from whence art-resistance surges. An interesting approach which comprehends marginality as a creative space is the one offered by bell hooks. Hooks determines that the *margin* is not only the place ‘imposed by oppressive structures’ yet also the place that ‘one chooses as site of resistance — as location of radical openness and possibility’ (bell hooks 2015:253). This attitude is very clear in the ability of Entrecalles to choose the margins of the *barrio* and to write, talk about and perform de-colonisation. By talking about *margins* as places for resilience we are understanding Entrecalles as social agents capable and determined to break with borders of commodified roles; rejecting a conception of passive subjects who remain subordinated in the marginality. As bell hooks avers, the margins are the places where the ‘colonizer’ who is the ‘speaking subject’, the one that represents ‘Latin American prototypes’ in the commodified circuits, is absent. Thus, instead of understanding the inhabitants of the marginal space as dominated, we can see that the oppressed, exploited, colonised people are speaking from the resistance (bell hooks 2015:150-151), representing themselves, projecting a voice outside the commodified canons and codes. Since these codes are also embedded in the corporeal representation of ‘Latin American prototypes’ I am going to explore now how Entrecalles actors ‘go into’ their bodies to decolonise the meanings embedded in ‘prototypical bodies and narratives’.



Marcelo, Lula and Jose acting the ‘Border scene’ (picture by Entrecalles)





Ben in the centre of the room at the 'Bearded scene' (picture by Entrecalles)



'Columbus scene': Marcelo — 'Castilian coloniser role'— gives Carlos — 'Indigenous role'— Catholic symbols and takes his gold (picture by Entrecalles)



Jose playing the 'Spanish role' in Russia; and the luggage on the floor (picture by Entrecalles)



'Last scene': Carlos holding the luggage; and reaction of the audience (picture by Entrecalles)

## 2. 'El Polvo de mis Huesos': bodies and narratives with different meaning

Christian 1: Where are the Catholic kings?!

[Actors select two members of the audience who will play Isabel and Fernando Catholic Kings who started the conquest in America. There is a royal trumpet sound and actors kneel before the 'kings']

Visigoth: We will establish the Hispanic monarchy and nobody will question its power.

Everyone: Integration, integration!!

Christian 2: Long life to Hispanic promiscuity! [actors look at him angrily]

Christian 3: My dearest majesties, we will inaugurate the Holy See so that we will legalise torture and use it against those who don't profess our beliefs.

Christian 2: I want that job, majesties! I'm experienced: I have lied, raped, killed, stolen and betrayed.

Christian 4: My dearest majesties; excellencies; very Christian majesties: We will increase the economic power of high nobility.

Christian 2: And who are they?

Visigoth: Those who have more riches.

Christian 2: And are we going to give them even more riches?

Visigoth: Yes, so that they will be eternal nobles.

Christian 1: My dearest majesties; excellencies; very Christian, apostolic majesties: Now that we are nobles,... What would you think about the boom of Castilian literature and the configuration of modern state?

Christian 2: We will conquest Africa! We need cheap labour.

[Royal trumpets sound again and Columbus enters]

Columbus: High Kings. Please, sign the contract. Tomorrow I'm leaving to discover the Indias.

[Extracts from the script 'El Polvo de mis Huesos', 'Catholic Kings scene']

The extract above is an instance of how narratives are decolonised and 'History is re-written.' Having grown up in the Spanish society, one can realise that the kind of issues discussed in this extract are, generally speaking, omitted in the dominant discourses. The dominant discourses 'celebrate' the Spanish miscegenation with *other cultures* or *bodies* as the 'first one that occurred in the history of humanity'. After all, the Spanish colonizers were accused by their British and French 'peers' as unable to control their sexualities with *other bodies* which were described in the colonizers' texts as culturally, religiously and phenotypically inferior (see in Morgan 2005; and Overmyer 2005). Yet the dominant discourses omit the testimonies that tell about the sexual objectification that Indigenous women's bodies were subjected to. As a 'counter-hegemonic history', the extract above highlights how

sexual differences joined class and racial ones that were produced through the colonisation. In this *Entrecalles* play, history, both in the past as in the present, is presented through the voice and the body of the ‘oppressed’. Whereas the last point emphasized the process of presenting that voice through subjectification taking precedent over the script, the following points focus on the body in that process of subjectification and de-colonisation during the actors’ personal corporeal exercise in rehearsals and performances; i.e. we look at how the actors, from their own bodies, create roles that are different to the stereotyped ones in the commodified industry. As we saw in the last chapter, bodies of ‘Latin Americans’ —as well as Africans— are represented through images of sexualised and racialised bodies in the commodified narrations about the colonial past and the postcolonial present. The *new* roles instead, get embedded with *new* meanings that in turn contribute to change the meanings of their personal narratives. Implicitly this involves a break with history written by the oppressors’ voices. The narratives in *Entrecalles* constitute an attempt to present *other* narratives and detach their bodies from these other meanings. To this end, it is necessary to break with dominant representations based on neo-primitivist conceptions of their bodies, through a cognitive process that Walter Mignolo (2008)—influenced by Gloria Anzaldúa (1999)— describes as ‘border thinking’ or ‘de-colonial thinking’.

Walter Mignolo takes a historical perspective and locates it in the sixteenth century the moment in which ‘European’ disciplines became dominant voices. Parallel to an economic transformation based in the capital, there surged in Europe an epistemological transformation that extended worldwide through ‘ontological racism’. Ontological racism, based in the Renaissance conception of Humanity, evaluated, and classified different populations in the world, thereby justifying European colonisations over non-Europeans. Modernism developed abreast this colonialism, designing histories, subjectivities, ways to live, knowledge and subjectivities of colonizers. Hence, the control of knowledge was in the hands of ‘White, Christian men’, who are conservative in gendered and sexual issues. So that, the cognitive apparatuses that emerged in modernism are patriarchal and racially constituted (Mignolo 2008:11), excluding the voices of the oppressed, who are considered remote from knowledge. From this moment until the present the disciplinary spheres with this ‘European’ design name themselves as rulers and evaluators of any discipline and knowledge. To resist this domination, decolonial thinking and responses to the hegemonic knowledge surge. The ‘de-colonial option’ introduces ‘border thinking’ or de-colonial thinking, which denounces the complicity between this domain in the control of knowledge and subjectivity. Mignolo shows that this ‘border thinking’, in its attempt to de-legitimise models of thought, can go in parallel to other critical thinkings. In this regard, Mignolo takes Foucault’s input of ‘bio-politics’ to explain how disciplines go parallel to state politics to control the body, by generating normative disciplinary knowledge. When those bodies reject this state discipline and build knowledge to foster the creation of societies unlatched from the modern state and the capitalist economy, the ‘body-politic’ surges, which produces knowledge to de-colonise the ‘knowing and being’. These bodies which were geo-politically formed as well as ethno-racially classified by the ‘coloniality of knowledge’, will transform knowledge by presenting itself in diverse

manners: masculine, feminine, queer, heterosexual, homosexual, in different languages, schools, religions, etc.

This Foucauldian influenced input of Mignolo helps me to explain how Entrecalles de-colonises the ‘knowing and being’: the ‘knowing’ that has been reflected in the ‘dominant narratives’ representing Latin American actors inside the neo-primitivist models — through what we could name ‘decolonial narratives’; and the ‘being’, those bodies ethno-racially classified in the neo-primitivist representations — through what we could name ‘decolonial bodies’. For this purpose, the election of the persons who will act in the play is important. Once Carlos has written the first draft of the script he chooses the actors who will join in. Sometimes he repeats actors who have participated in other plays, such as Marcelo. Yet most of the times he chooses new ones, since he looks for persons who meet the characteristics of the specific play. By saying characteristics, I am not just referring to physical characteristics, but those relevant to the requisites of the play. Whereas for previous plays the majority of the actors were Latin Americans, for ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ his aim was to look for a ‘representation of different “races”’. By trying to represent different “races”, Carlos looked for actors who had Latin American, European and African backgrounds. More than looking for actors who resembled a stereotyped idea of a geographic area, he chose actors who actually had these backgrounds, no matter their physical appearance. It is worth saying that their acting skills were valued too, and actors had informal meetings with Carlos as a way of casting. Their backgrounds are important because the body of these actors operates for the transmission of meanings in two ways, that could seem contradictory but are constituted in a complementary manner: 1) based on their backgrounds the body is utilised to reproduce the ‘body/role’ of the stereotyped constructions, but now, in order to project a different meaning. In this regard, it is fundamental the existence of *new* stories, of counter-narratives. 2) also based on their backgrounds, the body is utilised to break with the emphasis on authenticity and neo-primitivism that pigeonhole actors in specific roles by ‘ex-changing ethnicities and sexualities’; or in other words, by breaking with the logic ‘body/role’ that produces stereotyped models. Although these two intentions could appear contradictory or confronting, both display the ability of these actors to move around a wide acting spectrum. In the Columbus scene in the extract above, all the actors are in the scene at the same time, playing Christian and Castilian-Spanish roles. Carlos is playing the Visigoth role; Marcelo and Lula are male Christians; Juliana and Ben, male Muslims who convert to Christianity; and Jose plays Columbus. However, these same actors will appear in other roles in the next scene: Carlos and Lula will be those who play the Indigenous roles when Columbus arrives in the Americas. Despite there is a correlated personification of some these roles and bodies in the play, in which Carlos plays ‘Indigenous’, Ben ‘Arabic’ and Jose ‘Columbus’, these characterisations are embedded in narratives that discuss dominant ones. Furthermore, when actors ‘ex-change’ backgrounds and play *other* roles, there is no justification of why for instance a Latino cannot play a Spanish character and the opposite.



This relationship that actors maintain with their bodies is what permits them to break with a series of stereotypes. Lourdes Méndez explains how aesthetic canons form part of a system of rules about the body which include the way bodies are thought, perceived, represented and acted, which differs in relation to their sex, “race” and social class. Subjects internalise them and as a result these systems organise the cultural relationship that they have with their bodies which in turn constructs their subjectivity (Méndez 2004:61). The subjectivity from these experiences offers the chance to transcend, break with, or at least modify, the limits that the body imposes (2004:88). These limits are conditioned by a series of corporeal *habitus* that appears in an unconscious way. Similarly, Eugenio Barba explains, that these unconscious *habitus* that are embedded in the bodies conditioned by culture, social status, profession, etc. in a specific society, can disappear during performances. In the performances, the body does not have to respect ‘habitual conditions of the use of the body’ (Barba 2005:15). The body is theatrically ‘decided’, ‘alive’ and enables the scenic *bios* to attract the spectator’s attention before messages are transmitted (Barba 2005:9). This is got through a series of conscious exercises during the rehearsals which while being important for Carlos, not all the actors initially comprehended as such. Consequently, Carlos spent a long time during their rehearsals making sure that actors got aware of their bodies as a key for the construction of the characters. In the words of Carlos, the body in ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ was specially important due to actors playing different characters in the play. By starting to work through body techniques they developed a characterisation of different roles:

Carlos: Actors work with their voices and their bodies. And at many times, in the conventional plays they only work with the voice. I personally like to construct the characters from the body. Because the spectator has to identify that there is another character. You have to start to elaborate your character from the body.

So the rehearsals were directed to make actors aware of their bodies and the movements of their bodies. They started with exercises that permitted them to get rid of these *habitus*, followed by exercises that freely permitted them to express their emotions; and later Carlos directed the movement of their bodies towards the building of the roles by asking them to express emotions that were associated with the characters. As Cajade explains, through body-movement exercises and corporeal expression, actors learn to be aware of their own bodies to build and make alive the role they are going to play (Cajade 2009:14). Furthermore, this shows that creative processes of individual performers start in rehearsals. As Barba asserts, there is an ethnocentrism in considering a performance only from the point of view of the spectator, of the finished result. Rather he understands performance as the fruit of forms of adapting oneself, of thinking, as the result of a whole web of relationships and skills (Barba 2005:11). This presented a conscious process of breaking with rules that some actors had previously practised more, while others needed to develop it. Thus, Carlos had individual meetings with those who needed to put it more into practice. It is interesting to note that when rehearsals end, actors ‘go back’ to the exterior, being again exposed to the interiorisation of those *habitus*. So that, the rehearsals were very important to connect their minds and bodies in a repetitive manner, thus identifying the space for creativity with corporeal expressions of decolonisation.

The act of ‘decolonisation’ is performed by adopting a defiant stance vis-à-vis the spectator, who thus get implicated in the play as receptor of the *new* meanings embedded in the ‘decolonial bodies and narratives’. The placing of the stage in the performances was also a determinant for the relationship that actors established with the audience. Depending on the characteristics of the room where Entrecalles performed, they transformed it to adapt it to a circle making a stage (see picture). Usually, spectators sat down around the circle and remained in an horizontal position; at the same ground level. This provokes an intimate feeling and permits vis-à-vis contact. During the extract of the ‘Catholic Kings scene’, actors throw the phrases in a question mode to two members of the audience who have been selected to perform with them. This creates a dialogue with the audience that implicates them in the performance. They are asked to decide if they will ‘colonise the Indias and Africa’ and would ‘permit sexual abuse, slavery, enriching of upper classes or forms of acculturation’. They are quasi rhetorical questions and the performance continues regardless of whether the ‘Kings’ answer or keep silent. In fact, if the ‘Kings’ decide to ‘alter’ history, actors improvise a series of questions to continue that line. Yet the interest here is that the spectator has the chance to participate in the dialogue. As Augusto Boal explains in his famous work *Theatre of the Oppressed* (2008), techniques that make the audience participate in the creation of a play are fundamental to break with social repressions. The techniques that Boal suggests, force the audience to take their emotions out and project them into the construction of the play. These theatrical forms are, in his own words, ‘without a doubt a *rehearsal of revolution*’ (Boal:129). The kind of techniques employed by Entrecalles were not so clearly attempting to get the members of the audience to construct the play, but rather they sought a clear interaction with them as an attempt to foster a reaction from them, as if *rehearsing for social change*.

There was a day in which this dialogue with the audience could have acquired a special signification. This is the ‘Día de la Hispanidad’ —‘Columbus Day’— on the 12th of October. Carlos and some of the actors had anxiously tried to find a place to perform this day, since the meanings of the narrative of ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ would have been specially significant on a day that celebrates precisely what the play is denouncing. With institutional support, celebrations in the city of Madrid for that day are usually centered in a military parade with other official acts, and some years there has been also a parade of dancers from diverse regions of Spain and Latin America dressed in ‘traditional’ costumes. As counter-celebrations some Latin American collectives in Madrid and Barcelona have retaliated with symbolic actions such as hanging a Wiphala<sup>13</sup> flag in the Museum of America or on the Columbus statue. As Marisa Ruiz notes, these kind of actions are giving to the ‘Día de la Hispanidad’ a sense of decolonisation, to the extent that it is being re-named as ‘*Día de la Decolonización*’ —‘Day of De-colonisation’ — by some collectives (Ruiz 2015:248). With the intention to join these forms of protests, Carlos tried to find a place to perform in the *barrio*, contacting different organisations. Yet eventually Jose got a paid job for that day and the performance could not be done. The intention to protest against the colonial symbolism in state rituals that exalts dominant narratives and creates a

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<sup>13</sup> Wiphala: flag that symbolises the original populations of Andean countries.

correlation or continuity between the past and the present, did not materialise. Yet, as this situation was not new for them, instead of creating a feeling of frustration, it was solved with: ‘We’ll do it another year’.



‘Catholic Kings scene’ (picture by Entrecalles)



Stage before a performance. A circle formed with fabrics symbolises the stage (picture by Entrecalles)



### 3. Building the body with linguistic and musical expressions

In the process of the construction of roles we are seeing the articulation of subjectivities within the political collective identity in Entrecalles. As Brah asserted, political movement is crucial to try to re-inscribe subjectivity through calling for collective experience. Since the relations of power are produced by visual, sonorous, artistic, musical... forms — i.e. all that involves the *body* produces power (Brah 2011:154)— it is not naïve to expect that the re-inscription of subjectivities happens in ‘all’ — or partially— that involves that *body*. We have seen that Latin American and African actors have to exaggerate their accents to adapt them to a commodified representation of linguistic authenticity; further, that some actors have decided to speak a ‘normative Spanish’ to get more chances to work in the industry. So we look now at the linguistic and musical transformations that occur in the plays which can convey resistance projects, identity articulations and the subjectification of the characters. As important as the visual expressions of the body are the aural expressions, as shown in the different linguistic varieties that coexist in the plays and the music selected for the plays. In the play ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ the most striking linguistic transformation was produced by Ben. Once he had changed part of the script for the ‘Arab role’, he gradually introduced Arabic sentences into the play. This is something that was not discussed with anyone in the group and nobody expected it. He simply extemporised an Arabic sentence in one of their performances. What he did was translate a sentence from the text into Arabic then straightaway say the same sentence in Spanish. The actors and the technician’s reaction was of surprise, yet nobody made any comment about it after the performance or in the following rehearsals. Consequently, in the next performances, Ben continued adding more sentences in Arabic for the part of the ‘Arab role’, followed by their Spanish translations. This remained as a linguistic expression that Ben freely utilised at his will during the performances, that gave to the ‘Arab role’ a wider personification.

Such linguistic transformations were more evident in the play ‘Moscas y Milagritos’ in which the linguistic expressions were more intentionally fostered for the corporeal construction of roles. ‘Moscas y Milagritos’ is the play that Entrecalles was performing for almost two years before I joined the group but that I could see only a few times before it stopped. It narrates the life of street children, cases of prostitution, youth maternity in Peru and the dangerous pathways that lower classes have to take to get out of their situations by emigrating to other countries. To some extent, ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ is the continuation of ‘Moscas y Milagritos’, since the latter ends with an emigration and the former is influenced by Carlos’ own migration. Carlos wrote the script after his experience working with kids who live on the streets in Peru. He included the slang and linguistic varieties of those kids he worked with, so that the script was markedly full of these linguistic expressions. However, he encouraged actors of this play to transform their characters and adapt it to their respective countries or linguistic varieties. The actors were originally from Peru, Colombia, Spain and Venezuela, although as in the other play, actors had to be changed when they abandoned the country or for personal reasons and new ones originally from other countries such as Mexico, were incorporated. These actors had been

changing the script and including their linguistic territorial particularities. One of them is Ari, of Colombian background, who explained to me how she personalised two of the characters in the play:

I was ‘Garrapata’ and ‘Piojos’; the first was a youth and the latter a child. And to me it was a beautiful challenge and the result was very, very beautiful. It was also beautiful because Carlos decided to make very visible the Latino slang. Many people told him: ‘You’re not going to be able to represent that play because people here are not going to understand anything’. But it’s possible to understand it.

Ángeles: It is.

Ari: Maybe, you don’t get it straight away, but you do in two seconds and understand the joke. Even if it’s not your slang. And that’s beautiful. So I did all my best. When Carlos wrote it, it was more Peruvian. But the first thing he told me was: ‘Do it Colombian’. So I quickly put all that I had inside and started to search for stuff about the streets in Colombia. And I adapted it. It is difficult to do a character of your country, with our customs, to include a street-style. Because things there are very different to here. People there have to live things that nobody here would imagine. People laugh with the play because it is a comedy, but they could cry too. And the truth is that when you put your personal essence on it, the character is different. It was hard for me to work ‘Garrapata’ because he’s a thief,.. And the ‘Piojo’ is a child,.. So what I did was to change ‘Piojo’ voice and then that facilitated the body change. I put on a clown nose. In Colombia you see many kids playing clown to get some money. So this is so inside myself,... We have seen that all our life.



Characterisation of the actors in ‘Moscas y Milagritos’ (picture by Entrecalles)

Since this play was inspired by the live experiences of peoples who live in the lowest position in the Peruvian society, it includes a central discussion around social class status. The theory of articulation is clear in regard to how class differences should not be overlooked, since they mark differences as much as racist, sexual and gendered ones. The personal lives of some of the actors were ‘insufficient’ to build the characters, so, like Ari, they built them through research and memories of their countries, that they projected via diverse corporeal elements. Apart from the visual transformation of the body — through corporeal movements and the aesthetic— the linguistic transformation of the text was crucial to express a rich and varied vocabulary, expressions and accents. This linguistic aspect intrinsically refers to an old discussion about the domain of ‘normative Spanish’ in both Spain and Latin America.

By creating a parallel with the work of Josephine Lee in her study of the use of English in Irish theatre, it can be said that ‘normative Spanish’ is ‘the language of high culture’ (Lee 1995:161). Note that I am saying ‘normative Spanish’ instead of simply Spanish in an attempt to include a discussion that I believe is disregarded in many studies about linguistic conflicts in Spain. It is not only that ‘normative Spanish’ is, to the detriment of other native languages, the dominant language as an effect of the ‘cultural revolution’ of the state, but also, it is a neutralised Spanish, devoid of cultural and social signifiers. As part of the ‘cultural revolution’, the kind of Spanish that has been represented in films, media and other communication devices is that which lacks accents, varieties and linguistic expressions of the different geographical areas where Spanish is spoken. Instead, the Spanish that is mostly heard is of a ‘neutral’ accent or closer to the Spanish centre areas. Although this is lately changing, it is hard to find a TV presenter, journalist and actor who does not have a ‘normative Spanish’ accent. Mostly it is only when an ‘Otherness’ is highlighted that *other* accents or linguistic forms are used to indicate ethnicity and/or social status. This situation affects actors of Latin American, African and other backgrounds. If we remember, diverse actors had changed their accents to sound “Spanish” or to sound in an stereotyped “African” way. Yet this situation is not new to Spain. Latin Americans, Africans and others share with many Spanish this disadvantaged position. The reality of Spain, even much before immigration waves, is a mosaic of native languages, dialects, linguistic varieties, broken Spanish, slangs, accents and mixtures such as *Portuñol*, that one can hear from South to the North of the whole country, including its islands and autonomous cities.

Going back to the period of colonisation, there was a moment in which Spanish —old Castilian— appears as the dominant language and linguistic hierarchical divisions are created. In Latin American countries and other colonies such as Equatorial Guinea, ‘Castilian’ or ‘Spanish’ was imposed over other native languages, whose union would also create many pidgin languages and a complex panorama. However, I am going to focus here on Spain and the process that occurred after internal colonisation that happened in the country before its own colonisation of the Americas. Castilian or Spanish was imposed as the dominant language in Spain over the other languages spoken in the territory. Some of the native languages ‘survived’ to this domination during centuries. Yet the

linguistic construction of Spanish nationalism — strongly marked during the Franco's dictatorship— accentuated its use in institutional and private spheres detriment other languages. There were different ways to impose the use of Spanish, by prosecutions and prohibitions to speak other languages. As well there were other ways to impose Spanish that were equally or more effective, which are better explained by the work of Frantz Fanon. Fanon uncovers how colonised peoples —‘in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created’ (Fanon 2008:9) find themselves vis-à-vis the language of the civilising nation, the culture of the ‘mother country’. He states that the more the colonised adopts the mother country's cultural standards, the whiter s/he becomes by renouncing her/his blackness. So one of the most effective ways to get the subjugated to submit to the dominant language is by making them believe that their language, their parlance is ‘inferior’ and to ridicule it. This inferiorisation which continues today also explains the vulnerability of the use of linguistic varieties, parlance and accents by the natives of some southern areas of Spain (see for instance the work of Hoyo Piñas in his study of the *Estremeño*, 2003). Further, it explains how this cognitive mechanism is also used for the inferiorisation of Latin American accents and their linguistic varieties.

In the last decades it has become more frequent in Spain to hear institutional assertions of the existence of ‘various types of Spanish’ in an attempt to group diverse languages and linguistic varieties spoken in both Spain and former colonies. *Catalan*, *Euskara* —Basque— and *Gallego* —Galician— after many claims from their territories, have received international media visibility and some institutional recognition. Yet many other native linguistic forms of other territories in Spain and former colonies remain in the shadow or are even more disregarded in the official Spanish dictionary (DRAE). Before the complex situation that now exists in Spain regarding political and juridical terrains (see Caamaño 2015), much of the research done has focused on a discussion of the coexistence of Catalan, Basque and Galician with Spanish in their respective territories. Yet frequently these studies fall into the error of considering these four languages as representative of the whole country. Thus Catalan, Basque and Galician are seen as ‘ethnic languages’ while Spanish is understood as the language shared by the rest of the speakers of the country, hence classifying the rest of the inhabitants as ethnically homogeneous (see this discussion in Garrido 2010). I believe this position is sliding into a linguistic authentication that is not reflecting the reality of a country that has passed through so many processes of transculturation, both in the past and the present. In an era in which to speak a local or distinctive language indicates ‘authenticity’ and is utilised to reinforce political claims, those who do not express a ‘different tongue’ are seen as lacking strong argumentation to claim identity. Yet this perspective ignores how devastating forms of acculturation have been in both former colonies and inside Spain. That the Spanish has displaced the use of other languages/dialects in some territories does not mean that there are no remains of them. Yet even in those areas in which Spanish is the only official language, the result has been a linguistic transculturation that is reflected in accents, expressions and linguistic varieties; i.e. the Spanish heard in those areas is still far away from the ‘normative Spanish’. Furthermore, as said in the work of Caamaño, in big cities of Spain such as

Barcelona or Madrid there can be heard about two hundred different languages daily. So, I believe that to reduce the discussion of linguistic discriminations in Spain into the debate ‘Catalan, Basque, Galician and Spanish languages’ is insufficient to explain the complexity of the whole country and other linguistic discriminations, such as those that occur with Latin American, African peoples and Spanish from areas such as Murcia, Andalusia, Extremadura and Canary Islands, including Roma people (to mention just some).

So what the play ‘Moscas y Milagritos’ is doing transcends more than the intentions of linguistically building the characters of the play. Following the work of Josephine Lee, we can appreciate that when Entrecalles actors embrace their own linguistic forms and use them in theatre to make the dynamics of the play come alive, they are also ‘bringing its political question into the focus’ (Lee 1995:168). Furthermore, the existence of such different accents and linguistic forms in the play negate the idea that all the Latin American countries are homogeneous. While the so-called ‘Latin American’ identity has been reinforced in Spain and the voices of different Latin American countries united by a form of postcolonialism, those separate voices must not be unheard and simplified as homogeneous. Firstly, because, as the work of Marisa Ruiz shows (2015), this cohesion does not always equally incorporate African and Indigenous descendants; and secondly because these societies contain a rich linguistic and cultural variety, impossible to list here. The problematic is also that this linguistic enrichment is being depreciated and wasted to maintain ‘purity’ in the ‘high culture’ and that Latin American actors (et al.) see their chances to work in the ‘high culture’ reduced to their adaptability to ‘normative Spanish’.

Music can also tell us about subjectivities, resistances and construction of roles. I attended at the performance of ‘Moscas y Milagritos’ at the Carlos III University. While spectators were arriving, ‘Latin American’ —bachata— music was playing. Yet I also could listen as the play progressed to songs of a band which mixes different music styles and whose lyrics have a strong political content. When I asked Carlos when he feels a strong ‘Latin American’ identification he admitted not to have a defined and fixed identity yet through music is how he felt a *Latinidad*:

It’s when I listen to music like the group Calle 13, d’you know? I feel all the Latino in me. I’ve been living in many places: Peru, Nicaragua, Mexico, Spain. So I don’t have always a particular identity. When I was living in Mexico I felt that my Quechua background was more respected and appreciated than in Peru. Because Indigenous in Mexico are more powerful there. Some people in Mexico told me my face was beautiful. Many people think that Indigenous people are not beautiful. So when I was told that my face was beautiful I felt like, wow! When I was living in Mexico my accent was very Mexican and one day I approached to a group of Indigenous elders and I told them that I was one of them and they looked at me and said: ‘No, you are coming from the South’. They identified me very quickly (laughs). But with them, in Mexico I felt that my face can be beautiful too. And here in Spain is where I feel

more that Latin identity, d'you know? But not always. It happens specially when I hear songs like Calle 13; they have very powerful lyrics. That's why I put music like that in the play.

It is very significant that Carlos has never tried to adapt his accent to any in Spain but did when he has living in Mexico; a country he remembers as the one in which he has been able to live 'more openly' as a Quechua identity. Obviously these experiences move to a terrain which is not that of this fieldwork. Yet the interest here is the phenomenological correlation of the multiple subjectivities that combine in Entrecalles. By no means is the context the only thing that determines the subjectivities of the people who cohere together into a group. Although Carlos does not always profess a 'Latin identity', he does when he describes Entrecalles and what he calls 'the performative Latin schools'. The role of music in Entrecalles performances is very interconnected with their messages and the group identity which is formed. In 'El Polvo de mis Huesos' there are African and Latin American songs which interconnect with what is happening in the scenes. Yet it is specially in 'Moscas y Milagritos' when music becomes more evident as a connector of linguistic meanings and the cultural change that is fostered in Entrecalles plays. In the play, music has a powerful symbolism that 'enfolds' the bodies and the aesthetic; and their lyrics are a juxtaposition of actors' languages. As Elaine Savory discusses in her work about the cultural strategies of survival in Caribbean theatre, the role of music in theatre performances reflects a series of interconnected languages within a culture and can tell us about creative and innovative strategies which are needed to resist imperialisms (1995: 244-245). In sum, it tells us about different strategies to decolonise the very different spheres in which the postcolonial is reflected: the 'authenticated' construction of bodies, the linguistic expressions, the gendered, sexualised, racialised and class representations. It is an arduous task to make compatible the emotions, subjectivities and a group identity in an entertainment show. Yet the articulation of the musical, linguistic, corporeal strategies that I have explained here, cohere in the construction of these plays from the margins, the place wherein the voices of the subjugated are raised.

#### 4. Remaining in the *barrio*

As a way to conclude the focus on the fieldwork with Entrecalles, I will talk about how some members of Entrecalles —by using networks created in the margins of the *barrio*— get involved in works that attempt to maintain memories, transatlantic cultural exchanges and connections with Latin American artistic productions. Both Entrecalles plays and other artistic projects in which actors of Entrecalles were engaged with other artists, tell about a desire to maintain alive their cultural roots and claim a recognition for Latin American arts in Spain beyond commodified 'Latino roles' based on 'primitivism', 'authenticity' and 'Latinos' stereotypes. Part of the objectives of Entrecalles, other collectives and individuals is to raise 'Latin American theatres' in Spain and to break with neo-primitivism and corporeal stereotypisations. The presence of Latin American artists in Madrid has made it possible to open pathways for their compatriots to come to Spain. For instance, Marcelo has

been collaborating with a drama academic of Puerto Rican background, Virginia and other Latin Americans to foster encounters with Latin American performers in Spain. They worked together in the project ‘Ciclo Miradas’, in collaboration with the space of the Spanish dramaturg José Sanchís Finisterra —Nuevo Teatro Transfronterizo— around Lavapiés and other spaces such as the one managed by Marcelo —El Adefesio. Through ‘Ciclo Miradas’ and similar encounters they have brought contemporary Mexican, Chilean, Colombian, Cuban and Puerto Rican dramaturgists to Spain.

Similarly, other projects organised by the Entrecalles actors Ari and Jose have fostered a transnationalism between the ‘two sides’ of the Atlantic. They run three theatre plays which continue the attempt to de-colonise and de-stereotypise Latin American performances and actors, and to provide cultural visibilisation:

1. ‘Secuelas’—‘Aftermath’: Based on the personal experience of Ari with the ‘guerrillas’ in Colombia, she and Jose perform this play to talk about armed conflicts. As said by Ari, this play attempts to provide a wider visibility of the experiences of women in armed conflicts, who ‘are usually the most forgotten in the history and the texts’.
2. ‘Latinoamerican dream’: By attempting to make a correlation with Latin American stereotypes, Jose plays the role of ‘a Spanish prototype’, of a man who after struggling to get a visa, migrates to Latin America and must work in jobs which he is expected to be able to do as a Spanish but which he does not know; such as bullfighter, paella chef and flamenco dancer.
3. ‘La Selva Mágica’—‘The Magic Jungle’: Which is based on pre-columbian legends from Latin America. Ari explains that her intention with this play is to ‘introduce to children of Latin American backgrounds in Spain their roots, their indigenous cultures which are not shown in Spanish schools’.

With Entrecalles and their artistic networks I got immersed in so many cultural projects impossible to list here, of both Latin American and African artists. The initial objective of this research was to focus on Latin American performers, but I found an opened amalgam of nationalities and international encounters of three ‘worlds’: Latin America, Africa and Spain. Understanding the articulation of their differences and commonalities has been necessary to comprehend the transculturation of Latin American, African and Spanish cultural elements in present day of Spain; yet a cultural journey to the past has been needed too. The works of Fernando Ortiz (1981; 1986) offer testimonies to the important role that Subsaharan African actors and drama writers had in the birth of what is considered ‘modern theatre’; i.e. the theatre developed in Spain during the so called ‘Golden Age’ of artistic productions (in 1492-1681) and further. Ortiz’s works explain how, although these African artists brought a wide spectrum in performance, music and literature, their contribution to the creativity of the ‘Golden Age’ has been underrated. Hopefully this research is helping to throw light on some of the many Latin American and African productions in Spain; not only as a tool to foster social and cultural change, but also, and intrinsically, for their artistic value; the transculturation that nowadays occurs in multicultural Spain. I admit that this research has opened my eyes in regard to the large amount of

productions. Being a drama follower I have previously had the chance to appreciate some Latin American and African artistic productions in Spain. However, I must admit that the amount of productions that I have found during this research exceeded what I expected. The cultural production that exists in the margins of the multi-sited *barrio* by the artists I met during this fieldwork is such that at times it has been impossible for me to follow all of them, because they overlapped in time. The point is that one needs to get out from the commodified circuits and get immersed in the *barrio* to appreciate it.

When García Canclini wonders ‘everybody has culture, who can develop it?’ he is questioning how in neoliberal and multicultural societies, states select solely some ‘traditions’ and elevate those cultural forms to the status of ‘national culture’. We saw that this happens as a result of the ‘cultural revolution’ of the states, in which the ‘nationalised productions’ and the ‘normative Spanish language’ are key in the building of ‘high culture’. We have seen that to get some space in the commodified circuits involves playing racialised, classed and sexualised roles that typecast them as actors and as ‘Latin American peoples’. As Lourdes Méndez work shows (1995), Spain was one of the European countries interested in exposing the bodies and the cultural forms of coloniser in its own terrain. This representation has not been innocuous; it has reproduced in the metropolis prolonged interpretations of neo-primitivism, racism and authenticity. These ‘traditional’ cultural practices have come to the present through contemporary stereotypisations of ‘indigenous’ like that of ‘Machu Picchu’. And as well, it is reflected in the folklorist prejudices towards ‘Latin American theatre’, as Guillermo Heras signaled (2006).

Effectively Spivak wondered where the ‘subaltern’, i.e., oppressed groups and without a voice, ‘can speak’ (Spivak 1993). She formulated the problematic of intersections of gender, class and ethnicity in the context of capitalist production. She concluded that the ‘subaltern’ cannot speak because there is no place for them to express it, the women of these groups being the most oppressed. While we have seen that ‘the subaltern,’ the ‘former colonised,’ ‘the immigrant’ and ‘the Other’ cannot speak in the spaces of the commodified industry and institutional realm, they find ways to foster social change from the spaces of the margins, as also effectively bell hooks asserted:

Understanding marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonized people. [...] So I want to note that I am not trying to romantically re-inscribe the notion of that space of marginality where the oppressed live apart from their oppressors as “pure.” I want to say that these margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance[...] This is an intervention. A message from that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/colonizer. Marginality as a site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. Enter that space [...] I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between the marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance — as location of radical openness and possibility (hooks 2015:150-153).



At least the subaltern keep fighting to speak, and my intention in these two chapters has been to celebrate their successes, their resilience; to show that with many efforts they are articulating much of their problematics but as well are presenting their artistic productions. It is in the hands or ears of the society and institutions to listen to them. The assistance of spectators during their performances is a guarantee that their works reach some spheres of the society. Success is not measured here by profitable commodified art or economic value but by alternative forms of visibility, de-racialisation and de-colonisation. An interesting result would be that they could also get more access to forms of economic value; that their professionalism could be more economically rewarded and artistically valued. As well, I have tried to show that through their works, groups such as Entrecalles are fostering a more open access to culture for the lower social classes in Spain than that offered by commodified art subjected to 21% VAT. A task that they have assumed as part of the social and cultural change that they searching for from the *margins* of the *barrio*.

## Chapter Four: Latin American women using and building a feminist radio

The ethnographic tour of Madrid so far has presented a group of Latin American artists who band together with African and Spanish actors and trace their own paths to operate as a theatre company. For the following ethnography, attention is on how a group of Latin American women, who mostly work in domestic services, utilise a radio —Las Radiantes—already founded inside a Spanish feminist organisation —Hermanas Mirabal— to project their voices. In other words, the focus now is on how Latin American women join a radio run by a Spanish feminist organisation and utilise it to project their own concerns and problems as *women*, as *Latin American women* and also as workers in *domestic services* in Madrid. This case study is different from the other cases in this thesis. As in Entrecalles, the case studies in Australia involve groups running their own organisations to project their own works and voices, to which other people join in. However, this case study involves Latin American women who are joined to a feminist organisation that is attempting to articulate a gendered-political identity as a base to sisterhood. Latin American women approached this radio individually or in groups of two-three people for different reasons that I will further explain. Yet the relevance of their presence in the radio is that it demonstrates their strategies to get some visibility in a society in which they are in a strong disadvantaged position, marked by an intersection of oppression by *gender*, “*race*” and *class*. The stories that narrate their passage through other organisations to get to the radio and their meetings with Spanish women along the way, directs the analysis by discussions of feminist theories. Yet above all, the results are of extraordinary significance for revealing how these women, who are so frequently unheard on media and other parts of the society, find a way to project their voices through this radio.

In this chapter, the focus will be on seeing how the Latin American women participate in the foundation of the radio. This analysis reveals another difference in respect the rest to the case studies in this thesis in which the contingent sign for the political articulation has been strongly marked by racial classifications. Instead, the political identity that surges in the radio is the women’s attempt to be articulated through a gendered contingent sign rather than class and racial markers. However, we will further see in the next chapter, that the intersection race/class/gender in the Latin American women who assist at the radio is very determinant in their incorporation into the organisation and Spanish society in general; and that this cannot be ignored. Continuing in this chapter, I will give an explanation of the little room that these women have to project their voices in other mediated spaces. While seeing how little echo the voices of Latin American women have on mass media I have found significant commonalities between the representations of Latin Americans in journals, TV and radio and that we have seen in the performance industry. This is due to both art and media industries feeding back into each other in the construction in the social imaginary of the ‘Latino’ prototypes and most of the times they exclude the voices of Latin Americans. The chances to project their voices on this radio is also significant precisely because they can *decolonise* those representations by talking themselves. So this whole chapter attempts to show how these women find room in the radio and the difficulties

for the radio to grow. For both Latin American women and other users of the radio, this device is an instrument to achieve and consolidate autonomy in a society whose economic model has been designed under a patriarchal and sexualised system.

### 1. Incorporation of Latin American women to Las Radiantes radio

In October 2012 I saw on the internet that a recently opened feminist organisation in Tetuán was inaugurating a new work session and was looking for women to join their organisation, specially inviting the neighbours of the district where it was located: Tetuán. Las Radiantes radio is located inside this feminist organisation called 'Hermanas Mirabal'. It was advertised as a City Council funded space for juridical assessment, psychological support, professional development and cultural-mediated activities focused on the achievement of equality for women. I was living on the border of this district, that attracts a high Latin American population. Considering the important Latin American presence in the district, I went to find out about this organisation. When I arrived I was attended by Mari, a Spanish woman who worked as receptionist. She explained to me that the objective of the organisation was the empowerment of women, individually and collectively; individually through the strengthening of their self-esteem, and collectively through fostering sisterhood for social change. To that end, they organised different activities through workshops and groups, such as theatre, video production, literature, psychotherapy, yoga, patchwork and radio; directed mostly by Spanish employees of the organisation. After she registered my details I went to the room where the radio was and I had an interview with its coordinator, Carmen, an Hispano-Mexican woman experienced in social collectives and community radios in Madrid. During our chat Carmen explained that the radio was a tool that was available for any woman who participated in the workshops and the organisation in general to project their works and voices. She was looking for six people who would run it with her, organising the programs. I expressed my interest to be one of them and although I was not experienced at all, she accepted my participation. She invited me to assist at a meeting with a representative from the City Council the next week. Since the city council was the funding body of the feminist organisation, she wanted to interview the mayor or the council representative who would visit them. This day also would serve as a re-opening of the radio after some months break and to attract new participants. The next week I went to the arranged meeting. I arrived about 10:30 a.m. but nobody from the city council was in Hermanas Mirabal. Instead, there was a photography awards ceremony. I greeted Carmen who said she had forgotten to advise me that the council had cancelled the visit, but asked me to stay to help to organise the ceremony. More women arrived to organise it. The majority were Spanish who worked in the organisation and some participants. I saw two Latin American women in the ceremony room. One of them was the photographer of the third prize photo. I found out that she had been a radio member before but she quit it because she got a job that was incompatible with the radio hours. I then asked Carmen about this woman and she answered: 'Yeah, that's our problem. She can't come to the radio anymore because of her job hours. We also had another woman

from Ecuador and another one from Extremadura. Both of them also quit because they couldn't find a job in Madrid and went back to Ecuador or somewhere else. And Emely, another woman from Dominican Republic who also was in the radio, the same... She can't come anymore because of her job. This is our problem. We get people for the radio, but there's not a continuity. They have to leave because they have problems finding jobs, with their visas or alike things. And many of them, when they find jobs, they work as housekeepers and have difficulties to come back here'.

This first contact with the women of the radio showed me the situation that I would see during the following twelve months that I spent with them. The participation of the women in the radio was intermittent, which made the continuity of the radio programs difficult. Yet there was a major participation of Latin American women in the radio. In the other activities and groups inside Hermanas Mirabal, the participation was mainly of Spanish women from the Tetuán district; many of them retired. To a lesser extent, but second in number were Latin Americans of a younger age and from different parts of Madrid. And the minority were Moroccan who also lived Tetuán. Men were not allowed until Friday evening, since there was the belief that a feminist agenda and sisterhood would be better formed if only women participated in it. Usually Friday was the day in which some of the many cultural groups formed in Hermanas Mirabal exhibited their works, and the doors were open for everyone, both men and women. As I have said, contrary to the rest of the groups, the radio group have gathered a majority of Latin American women. However, as the instance above shows, their participation in the radio was always conditioned by their jobs, which in the majority of the cases were in domestic services. Las Radiantes radio, as the other workshops in Hermanas Mirabal, operated a volunteer program; i.e. they got no economic reward for their work. So their continuity in the radio depended on whether they could make compatible both activities. However, the interest of these Latin American women for using the radio to project their voices and concerns was obvious. The radio helped them to proclaim precisely what was making their attendance difficult: their pigeonholing as Latin American in domestic service, a situation strongly marked by the gendered racialisation of the labour system in Spain that I will detail further in the following chapter. For now I will describe their incorporation into the dynamics of the radio and their cohesion inside a feminist identity.

I will commence by introducing Noemí, a Kichwa woman from Quito, Ecuador. She arrived in Spain about 2005, as a domestic servant of a Ecuadorian family, the father of which had an important political position. Since they moved to Madrid she followed them and worked for this family until they had a strong discussion about her claims of improving her working conditions. Since this family refused to increase her salary and grant other requests, Noemí quit the job and the house where they lived, becoming homeless. She found refuge in a church which later helped her to get another job as housekeeper with a Spanish family. Again, after a low salary and many hours of work she resigned and continued her search. During her job hunting she saw the organisation where Las Radiantes initially was settled in Lavapiés, as she explained to me:

I was seeing that place everyday. But I didn't know what it was about. And one day I happened to enter. I was always looking for jobs and I saw a logo of the Madrid council on the door. That was different to the logos of other places I had gone to look for jobs. So, out of curiosity, I entered. And then I started to go back more and more, meeting people and doing some workshops. And thus, I got involved in the radio. Because the radio started there. Then later it moved to another place that I don't remember its name. And then I had to quit it to attend my husband who got sick. During the time we were in Lavapiés we recorded about four or five programs. That's what we did.

Noemí then was one of the first members of the radio whom I met in a visit she made to Las Radiantes, since the others had not continued. This radio had mainly grown from two different projects that the organisation which runs Hermanas Mirabal (called Dinamia) has directed with the support of the city council: one in Lavapiés —for labor assessment— and another one in Tetuán — for feminist purposes. Their movement from one *barrio* to another has permitted contacting women from those areas where it has been settled. Both projects were designed to have different objectives, yet both attracted the same subject: women of working class from two of the areas with the highest Latin American population in Madrid: Lavapiés and Tetuán. At the time in Lavapiés, Carmen, Mari and other Spanish workers who still are in the organisation were also employees. To them joined Bea, a Spanish actress and drama director who proposed herself as a volunteer to organise some mediated-cultural activities. Then she founded the radio with some of the women who were assisting the organisation like Noemí, as Carmen describes:

At the beginning of the project in Lavapiés we had an amazing place, because there was quite a lot of funding. We had a classroom for vocational courses, geriatric courses, labour rights courses,.. But the council cut the project. So that we ended having a cubbyhole; just a room. [...] The three tables used for labour assessment were next to each other; and when you were chatting with some woman you could listen to the woman from the other table. And then Bea arrived with the women of the radio, they used a small table in the corner. She only used to coming during the evening, when only radio women were around. But despite all this, we did a very interesting job. When we closed, women missed us a lot.

Carmen, Bea and Noemí helped 'move' the radio from Lavapiés to the next place this organisation was situated, in the central area of Ópera. The organisation ran a similar project in this new place, which also attracted women looking for jobs. Ópera was a way station between Lavapiés and Tetuán for a short time. Yet in this time Emely, from Dominican Republic and Cecilia, from Paraguay joined. Both stayed in the radio until it again moved, this time to Tetuán, Cecilia being the only one who remained until my last day with them. During the time in these three places, other Latin American and Spanish women were joining and leaving, influencing the character that the radio took. In Lavapiés and Ópera, the radio attracted women who looked for labour assessment, while in Tetuán the project of Hermanas Mirabal took a different direction and attracted women with different interests. The project in Lavapiés

and Ópera offered a pathway for Latin American women to be incorporated into the labour market; the one in Tetuán, a pathway for leisure activities with a feminist character outside ‘patriarchal’ influence. Yet paradoxically, although both projects were designed with different objectives in different *barrios*, as mentioned, they both appealed to people of similar characteristics: Latin American women who work in domestic service. This can be explained by the fact that the subjectivity of these women is both class and gendered conditioned and the labour and feminist projects where Las Radiantes has been formed, respond to their needs. Yet as well, it is necessary to note that this conjunction ‘class, gender’ is also mediated by the incorporation of “race” in the constrained triangle ‘race-gender-class’ in the context of political economy in Spain, in which Latin American women have come to be pigeonholed in the role of sexual and domestic care. I will extend this problematic in the next chapter, but will maintain here the focus on their incorporation into a gendered political identity in Hermanas Mirabal. This contextualisation permits us to see the reasons why Latin American women search for alliances with other women and cohere with other women into a collective political identity in response to patriarchal domination. The transnational perspective of Rosalva Aída Hernández, who documents travel of Indigenous Mayan migrants around different American countries, is useful to see why people create new alliances and identities during their adaptation to the new conditions and contexts where they settle. Her work shows that these people establish alliances and coordinate actions with other groups racially marked such as First Nations in those places where they settle. A situation very similar to that is the one we have seen with Entrecalles in the alliance of Latin American, Spanish and African actors. As well, she explains how in the case of Indigenous women, after facing experiences marked by gendered oppression such as human trafficking and sexual and domestic violence, they have begun to build their own collective spaces and ‘to reflect on their specific rights as women and as Indigenous women’ (Hernández 2012:83). In the case of Latin American women in Las Radiantes, they are not building their own collective, yet utilising the one created by Mirabal, specifically because these women approached mostly individually and it is in Mirabal where they met. However, it is worth highlighting that, as Hernández explains, these women are searching for a space in which to construct their rights as women and as ‘postcolonial migrants’ who work in domestic services. I am not saying here that these women have ‘developed’ a feminist identity not professed before in their own countries. In fact, many of the Las Radiantes members were involved in other feminist organisations in their countries and/or mediated spaces. Rather I am arguing that the new context where they are situated as domestic servants—with little visibility in Spanish society, and frequently difficult working conditions— ‘forces’ them to search for tools to re-build an identity for resistance in a collective manner. Collectives and associations have been described by feminist authors in Spain as promoters of social change, as a ‘space-bridge for a change’ (see del Valle 2001 and also Maquieira 1995). Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal are the space that these women choose individually in their search for a political feminist space that fosters social change, which in turn it can be on their side.

Hermanas Mirabal and Las Radiantes —as the ‘diffuser’— employ a methodology that fosters sisterhood, being very influenced by the Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagarde’s work. Marcela Lagarde has visited this space a few times giving talks about the methodology she proposes for feminist organizational forms, named ‘*sororidad*’ — sisterhood. As in the theory of articulation, the *sororidad* puts forward political agreements between women to achieve rights, which must be limited in time, have clear and concise objectives yet also must include views of how to *review* or *end* them (Lagarde n.d.:126). Marcela Lagarde explains that this methodology aims to provide empowerment for all women:

*Sororidad* emerges as an alternative to the policy that prevents women from gender positive identification, recognition, aggregation in harmony and alliance. [...] It sets out the political ethical principles of equivalence and equal relationship between women. [...] *Sororidad* is an ethical, political and practical dimension of contemporary feminism. It is an experience of women which leads to the search for positive relationships and existential and political alliance; subjectivity to subjectivity with other women, to eliminate all social forms of oppression and to build mutual support to achieve the empowerment of every woman.

It is not about loving each other; although we can. It is not about we, spellbound, agreeing on a faith or in closed and mandatory conceptions of the world. It is about agreeing on some things with more and more women. To sum and create links. [...] When the personal has been framed in the collective, the need to agree surges to enhance our impact in the world. Thus, it is possible to move from a unique solution for every contingency, to the support and the limited solution for the construction of social paths for gender (translated by the author from the original, n/d: 124-127).

To this end, Lagarde’s work is proposing to establish goals in feminist agendas, that permit all women—independently of their class, nationality, ethnicity, origin, migration, generation, age, education, abilities with languages, technologies, etc— to enjoy the same resources, and freedom to work and think. Hermanas Mirabal and Las Radiantes have adopted this ambitious methodology in the attempt to articulate a gendered political identity that unites the voices of those women they work with. So that, their objective is that women from different backgrounds and social positions cohere together into this *sororidad*. This open characteristic is the one that has permitted people like Noemí, Emely, Cecilia and other Latin American women to utilise the radio for projecting their voices. The similarities that this methodology presents in respect to the theory of articulation resides in the attempt to unite diverse subjectivities and realities into the same political identity. If we go back to the work of Avtar Brah, we saw that the articulation of political identities can involve the suppression, partially or fully, of one identity through the assertion of another. However, this does not mean that different identities cannot coexist. As Brah explains, if identity is a process, then we cannot talk about an existing identity as if it was always constituted. Rather it is more appropriate to talk about collective identities as a political process, different to identity as a process *in* and *of* subjectivity; the political process of *proclaiming* a collective identity through multiple fragments, as a *collage* (Brah 2011: 153). The Latin American women who joined Las Radiantes did not unite in an attempt to constitute a Latin American identity or a ‘sub-group’ of Latin Americans women inside the organisation. They joined the

organisation mostly individually, yet they got to project their diverse subjectivities and contribute to the construction of a *collage* of women from different backgrounds inside the *sororidad*. Hence, there arose specific moments and talks directed to treating the situation of these women during the radio meetings and their programs as we will see. Their experiences, subjectivities as Latin American women in Madrid, mark a specific social position racially marked that must not be ignored in the building of a *sororidad*. As the own Brah explains, racist relations of power are not reducible to social class or gender, but they are not completely independent. In the same manner, we could say that patriarchal relations of power are not independent of the racial and class ones. In what follows, I will keep explaining the ways that other Latin American women from the Tetuán district joined Las Radiantes; Tetuán being an area characterised by a large Latin American population of working class.

## 2. Approaching the radio from anonymity

In the move of Hermanas Mirabal from Lavapiés and Ópera to Tetuán some of the participants such as Cecilia, who initially assisted in search of jobs, continued being involved in the organisation. Once settled in Tetuán, other new women approached them in diverse ways. Some of them offered themselves with the enthusiastic idea of getting involved in a feminist organisation. Yet others were assisting in search of juridical or physiological assessment. In both cases, some of these women went on to form part of the radio, in a continued or occasional manner. As a strategy to attract women from the district, Las Radiantes created a show that had an anonymous character. This show was coordinated with the lawyer of the organisation, with the aim to facilitate making use of the offered legal service. The idea was encouraged by Carmen after numerous occasions in which women from the district arrived at the organisation in search of support. Since many of the consultations were about legal assessment on immigration, problems with their jobs, forms of abuse, etc., the anonymity could give them more confidence to expose it in the radio. Considering that similar concerns would be shared by other people, this program was originated to offer a tool of expression and assessment. Furthermore, the repeated opinion of many participants in the radio in general was that they liked the chance that this device gave them to express themselves without being seen. This kind of strategy has been successfully employed in other feminist radios, as for instance in the work of the Tanzanian feminist Fatma Alloo in the radio of the ‘Tanzania Media Women’s Association’. As she explains, radio shows of this kind are specially useful for cases in which women want to keep their anonymity and treat issues that are not easy to talk about openly (Alloo 2013). So, although made anonymously, importantly, this kind of strategy creates room for them to use the radio to project their voices.

After my first visit to the radio, the radio was run by Carmen, Cecilia, María Magdalena and myself. Cecilia was reserved about her past and experiences in Madrid, so there is little I can add about her here, apart from her being unemployed and experienced in domestic sector. María Magdalena, is a woman of Ecuadorian background who lived in Tetuán. She approached the organisation with an



interest to be involved in a feminist organisation and a radio. She was studying an esthetician course, and although she was unemployed, her previous work experiences in Madrid were also in the domestic service. She was a very active person in the organisation who tried to participate as much as she could in different workshops and activities. Carmen decided to run the radio just with three of us instead of the number of the six people she initially thought, in spite of there being more women interested in joining the radio. This was because she wanted to consolidate the radio with those women who seemed more available and enthusiastic to remain. After continued departures of other women, this idea seemed the best too her. Furthermore, both Cecilia and M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena were experienced in their previous countries with community and feminist radios. At this time, I had already told Carmen about my research so that I also remained as a participant in the radio. However, Carmen decided that the radio needed to remain open for other users of the organisation and to project to the ‘outside’, the Tetuán district. Thus, she devised a show of ‘consultation with the lawyer’ for women who, like Cecilia, wanted to remain in the anonymous but also participate, and as well, for those whose job or family situation did not permit them to continuously participate. This ‘consultation with the lawyer’ show consisted of the presence of the lawyer during the recording of the program, who answered the questions that Las Radiantes workers read from those that had been left in an anonymous way in a box placed at the entrance, or by emails or when women personally approached the radio. The questions that the lawyer answered were about various matters: how to get juridical free assessment; about existing social services for single mothers without resources; pathways for undocumented women who have suffered sexist violence to denounce it;<sup>14</sup> and the like. In the introduction to the first of these programs, Carmen directed some words to the lawyer which reflects the necessity to create the show:

This evening we have Marisa, our lawyer. She is going to help us to answer the questions of some of our friends who have written us by email and by sending us some notes. We are very happy to have you here, Marisa. And we hope that we can do this many more times. And specially we hope that you help us to understand things about the juridical world which is so complex. But specially that you can help and reassure to some of the women who have serious problems and frequently come to us asking for advice.

The radio worked through regular meetings on Thursday evenings, plus other occasional meetings. On those Thursday evenings, several times the women that Carmen refers to arrived. During the time I was in Las Radiantes, those arriving were Latin Americans. This coincidence is not accidental and it also partially explains the higher participation of Latin American housekeeper women in the radio. First, there is a high Latin American population in the district. As well, as far as I know, those who worked as housekeepers and came to the radio, had their only day off work on Thursdays, since their bosses have chosen this day in consultation with other employers to facilitate that their women can

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<sup>14</sup> The insecurity to pursue cases such as of sexist violence for women who are undocumented is big, with the doubt being whether they could get legal support or on the contrary whether they would be deported or imprisoned. How problematic this situation can be is seen in the example that Marisa Ruiz offers about a woman victim of sexual traffic in Spain who was temporally imprisoned in a CIE (detention center for foreign) even though the Spanish legislation states that on these cases women must be protected (Ruiz 2015:323-324).

enjoy their free day with other housekeepers. As they told me, this was not a 'written norm' but a usual practice with women working in the domestic sector who enjoyed days off. Since the radio was the last group to stay at the organisation on Thursdays, when the lawyer and the psychologist had left, Carmen had to stop work to attend to the women who arrived. Sometimes they were participants of 'Hermanas Mirabal' or the radio and other times were women who were searching for an organisation that provided services for 'immigrants'. For instance, on one of those days, the radio group was involved in a training workshop and Carmen stopped it:

'Sorry girls, I need to solve something. A Dominican woman, who was in the radio last year is asking us to go tomorrow with her to the court. A man who was on the street hit her daughter. She doesn't know the Spanish regulations, plus she's illiterate. So we have to see who can go with her tomorrow'.

Another day we were editing a program and a Latin American who was not a participant in the organisation arrived with her son:

Woman: I'm looking for the lawyer on duty.

Carmen: This is not the place for the lawyer on duty. But you could talk with our lawyer who will be here in September. Is it for family reasons?

W: For my son; child protection.

C: It's not possible until September. Could you wait until then?

W: Do you know any place where I can find a lawyer?

C: Go to the organisation which is upstairs; although they only work with immigration issues. Ask them if they also work family issues. It's very hard to find a free lawyer nowadays.

Another day, a woman also originally from the Dominican Republic arrived saying she was sick and could not get an appointment for a doctor. Women who were around told her that there were some organisations in Madrid helping 'immigrants' to find doctors willing to attend them. After the most recent policies in the country, 'immigrants' have lost the right to enjoy the public health system. To counteract this, a network of doctors and community organisations were working in attending these people. For those who could not pay a private doctor this pathway constituted a hope.<sup>15</sup>

These are some instances in which women arrived at Las Radiantes after frustrated attempts to find an organisation that helped 'immigrants' and offered lawyer services. The main reason is because from about 2010 when the financial recession in the country worsened, organisations which cover social

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<sup>15</sup> From 2012, the state government limited a health system which was close to universality principles, to one eliminated first for undocumented immigrants, being progressively extended also to Spanish and other residents who were unemployed. In some media, it was possible to see heavy cases from testimonies of 'immigrants' who did not receive health care resulting for some of them in deaths. 'Doctors in the World' association in Spain and alike made public a statement in which they rejected this health reform and called doctors to disobey it under the protection of the Hippocratic Oath, which demands protecting the health of everyone without restrictions or discrimination. This was followed by protests from health workers who affirmed to be forming a 'disobedient network of patients and health workers' against this law. The hard task for the affected was to find those doctors willing to 'disobey' government fiats. See *El Público* (2013, May 04; 2013, May 16).

services had closed. This situation especially worsened when the national, regional and local austerity policies of the conservative government (PP) from 2011 reduced the budget for social and immigrants services. Although ‘Hermanas Mirabal’ and Las Radiantes were not particularly directed towards the ‘migrant’ population, the realities of the women who attended made them more involved in issues of ‘immigration’ than initially they had programmed. Consequently, it is necessary to explain here the composition and history of the Tetuán district, to better understand the visits of these women.

As in Lavapiés, the Tetuán district was formed by immigrants who during the dictatorship arrived mainly from the Southern Spanish regions of Andalusia, Extremadura and also Castilla. These peoples were of lower class and had to live in houses dilapidated conditions. In more recent years, new incomers arriving mainly from Latin America —predominantly from Ecuador and Dominican Republic— settled in some of these remaining old houses. As well, middle class youths from other parts of Madrid settled in some which had been restored. These populations are not equally distributed over the six *barrios* of the district. Latin Americans are more predominant in the popularly named *Barrio Latino* —which corresponds to ‘Bellas Vistas’ *barrio*— and ‘Cuatro Caminos’ *barrio*. New Spanish incomers of middle class in the north of the district, and old working class Spanish residents remain all around (see a description of Tetuán in Martín Coppola & Martín Pérez 2008). To some extent Tetuán has similitudes to the forms of urban occupation in Lavapiés which ‘face’ with the neoliberal urban planning. The old houses of the *Barrio Latino* and Cuatro Caminos present barely liveable conditions that lead to their inhabitants to spending more time outside. Importantly, the urban planning lacks open spaces and meeting areas such as parks (2008:248); all of which makes their streets, their shops and the organisations around to be more suitable places for socialisation. Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal is located between these two *barrios* with a higher Latin American population: the *Barrio Latino* and Cuatro Caminos.

Tetuán associations have been active from the times internal immigrants settled in the district, mainly promoted by the neighbours (see some examples of associations in Carnacea Cruz 2011a, Rico 2011, Martín Coppola & Martín Pérez 2008). With the arrival of overseas ‘immigrants’, new migrant associations, NGOs and other organisations opened; including those developed by the council such as ‘Hermanas Mirabal’. Between them was ‘Quisqueya Cultural’, a Dominican organisation that had closed its doors just before this research. As said, cuts on funding from the conservative state, regional and local governments were the main reasons for closure of organisations in Tetuán, other parts of Madrid and Spain in general.<sup>16</sup> Since ‘Quisqueya Cultural’ closed in Tetuán, ‘Hermanas Mirabal’ was expecting to appeal more to Dominican women for leisure activities, but it did not result in a higher turnout; or at least not as much as the Spanish population from the district. Yet they did come for the juridical consultations such as those of the instances above. In order to find out about the mechanisms

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<sup>16</sup> Some important organisations that worked with migrant population that closed are CEAR (Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid) closed in many regions of Spain, some CEPI (Participation and Integration Community in Madrid region) and other series of social services for the whole population.

of Hermanas Mirabal that appeals to the different backgrounds that exist in the district I asked Carmen, who suggested different pathways:

That's a good question; the million dollar question.

I personally believe that the participation of women is good. And since the economic crisis, you can see that those organisations which work on employment are more attractive, right? But in the end we can see that there's an important participation here. But well, we have to keep analysing how to reach women with different profiles. For example, why do Dominican women not come as we are in the core of this district, which is full of Dominicans? We have a very few Dominicans coming. No more than ten; for juridical assessment reasons. Some come for the psychological assistance because of violence issues. But not many, really,...

There are Moroccan women coming, but in a very special way. Through a Moroccan woman who is living in Spain for a long time and speaks perfect Spanish. She's working with them in another part of the district, about Arab culture, their traditions and literacy; actually in Spanish. And they come for the activity we have now: 'Tea with Amina'. They come and have a chat with other women users while drinking Moroccan tea.

And also,.. [she takes a deep breath]. This is only my opinion, right? But it's hard to get the immigrant population in general or Spanish who are in a hard situation to come, because their priorities are others. And although this should be a priority for them, they don't see it like that. So, some of them have been coming through the assessments, the psychologist service, some workshops,.. Then, we hook them, but that is a slower and more individual process.

The radio-show of 'consultation with the lawyer' was one of the paths to 'hook' them. Yet as well, as a rebound effect, it provided the room for these women to make heard their voices and concerns. It is interesting on this point to see that many of the participants in the radio who first attended for these assistances, later kept going back and getting involved in different workshops and groups. And even though some of them stayed anonymous, their voices were heard; voices that, as I will further detail, are very unheard in the media.

In the face of this situation, the whole organisation of Hermanas Mirabal had to re-structure its functioning and give more importance to issues that affected these women from a district which has such a 'migrant' character. Hermanas Mirabal formed part of two committees of associations of the district which have regular meetings with institutional representatives from the council. Initially they belonged to the committee for 'Gender Equality' and 'Health' issues, yet they decided to also join the committee of 'Migration'. As explained by Carmen, these committees also opened a series of possibilities to expand networks and further attract more women:

Somehow to be inside those committee of the district which engage on specific problems brings back the chance to multiply possibilities. In some cases it's useful for the utilisation of resources. For example, here we have a space that we cede, because this place is big. Then, as soon as we can maintain our activities, other people can come here and meet here. And there

are other organisations in the district that do that too. And at the moment in which we have to propose some activity or claim, obviously it has more scope than if an organisation is alone claiming from the desert.

As Martin Coppola and Martín Pérez argue, these organisations and their networks in Tetuán are somehow generating micro-politics by ‘searching to transform a specific social reality’ (2008: 225). They act as intermediaries between population and institutions. Some organisations in the district do not regard ‘immigration’ issues as strongly as others do. Yet it opens ways to exchange information and even users. For instance, in Hermanas Mirabal there were always flyers from other organisations more specialised on ‘immigration’ issues that offered assistance, such as “Learning Spanish” and “Spanish immigration regulation” courses. The formation of networks is important because it can create a stronger voice and because it expands the possibilities for other users. Interestingly, one of these organisations, FERINE, was one which ceded its space for rehearsals to Entrecalles. In relation to the room that Hermanas Mirabal ceded for other users, it also facilitated the engagement of a group of Latin American women with the radio. There were four women who were running a project independently of Hermanas Mirabal. The project was run by Elizabeth, an Hispano-Mexican artist who got to know about this free space of Hermanas Mirabal through another feminist organisation she was involved in. She was working with three Peruvian women of Quechua background who also were employed in domestic sectors. Thursdays being the only day off of these three women, Elizabeth had to look for a space that could permit her to work on that day. The other feminist organisation only could cede her a space on Saturdays, so they put Elizabeth in contact with Hermanas Mirabal. Once working in Hermanas Mirabal they knew about Las Radiantes and offered themselves to collaborate with the radio by being interviewed about the project they were running and their lives in Madrid. I will further detail their works in the next chapter. What I have tried to show here is that the incorporation of Latin American women to Hermanas Mirabal, and the use they have made of the radio forced the organisation to direct their views about the *sororidad* project towards their subjectivities, their experiences. The experiences of these women in Madrid are not only gendered marked, but also racially and class marked by their position in Spanish society as ‘immigrants’ and working in one of the most devalued sectors in Spanish society, namely the domestic service sector, a position that, as diverse studies in Spain have shown (see for instance Guitiérrez 2010, Herrera 2011) is racially and gender designed in the construction of the ‘postcolonial immigrant woman’. It is important to remember here that Las Radiantes has been located in two areas with a high percentage of Latino American peoples of working classes (Tetuán and Lavapiés), so that it is unrealistic to expect them to shed their class and ethnic positions and the restrictions they have as ‘postcolonial immigrants’ in the society. As well, I would like to explain here and emphasise that Latin American women who attend and look for assistance at ‘Hermanas Mirabal’ do not do it because other Latin American organisations may not have a feminist component character or because they search for ‘Spanish feminist care’. Rather, it was provoked by the disappearance of social and cultural organisations in Madrid specially those for ‘immigrants’ as I have explained. Thus, Hermanas Mirabal

constitutes one of the remaining organisations that still offer services for ‘immigrants’; or better said, ‘immigrant’ women.

I have been mentioning that many of these women —those who appear with names here and the anonymous ones— could not keep attending the radio over a long period. This had been affecting the continuity of the radio programs, since during my time there they only produced about ten shows. However, there were more situations that made it difficult to maintain participation of users in the radio, which had more to do with the norms settled by the funding body about the use of the space. In the following part we will see how the radio tried to counteract some of these limitations with the help of other community radios in Madrid.

### 3. Filling gaps with community and *libre* radios in Madrid

In this part the analysis again puts the *state* in the centre and revolves around the debate between institutional domains and *libre* forms of production in community radios. There are two main difficulties for the production of the radio programs caused by this formal relationship: the limited time schedule in which Las Radiantes was open and the limited resources they possessed to produce and expand their programs. To counteract these shortcomings, Las Radiantes requested the collaboration of Madrid *libre*/community radios which partially filled gaps that hindered the broadcasting. This analysis will help to see how Las Radiantes locates between formal institutional domains and informal engagements with other community radios; and how the norms of the *state* in its ‘cultural revolution’ limit the capacity of action of the radio. Importantly, while trying to fill gaps Las Radiantes has opened a series of networks with other Latin American-Spanish feminist radios which —as they share a sense of ‘gendered political identity’ and interest— gave Las Radiantes more visibility.

Firstly, one of the main problems that some Latin American and other women had about participating more in Las Radiantes was their schedule. I said at the beginning of this chapter that there was high participation in the organisation of Spanish women of the district who, importantly, were retired. This is because the organisation was in a building that belonged to the council and its hours were 10 a.m to 8 p.m. from Monday to Fridays, which is the time that the council permitted the space to be opened. Hermanas Mirabal occupied the third and fourth floors of the building. The radio was in the third and the free-space in the fourth. In the fifth floor there was another organisation that worked with the ‘immigrant’ population through workshops for learning Spanish and other series of supportive workshops. The activities of both organisations had to finish before 8 p.m. in order to leave everything organised for the next day and to secure that everyone had left the building. Paradoxically from 6-8 p.m. was the time in which many women who were employed could assist. So some of them requested that the space be kept open for more hours and during the weekends. Moreover, also staff too

considered that they should extend their open time to permit more women from the district to assist, but this would require contracting more staff.

One indication that to keep open after 8 p.m. would attract more people is the use that the neighbours make of spaces in the district around that time. It is precisely from about 7 p.m. when neighbours make more use of the spaces in the *barrio*. I will go back again to the description of Tetuán. The first time I visited Tetuán was in 2008, accompanied by a Cuban social intermediary worker in the district and anthropology classmates from my university. We were visiting local small shops in Cuatro Caminos *barrio*: old shops managed by elder Spanish who had lived in the district for a long time and; new, vivid ‘Latin American’ shops, hairdressers, bars and *locutorios* —shops that offer international calls, internet services and on whose walls there are job postings. The latter were predominantly managed by Latin American peoples; some of them kept open until midnight or further and offered products and food from diverse Latin American countries. Cuatro Caminos has a sort of chaotic street order and it is divided by an invisible border: Bravo Murillo street —a big venue with predominantly shops of big entrepreneurs. During the day, Cuatro Caminos remains ‘isolated’ from the noise of the traffic, the metro and the bunch of people who do shopping in Bravo Murillo. During the evening-night, the noise ‘enters’ Cuatro Caminos, where it is possible to hear Latin American music and those who come back from their jobs and split between their houses, the street, bars, *locutorios* and other shops. When I did fieldwork in Tetuán in 2012/2013, I did not notice much variation from 2008. Shops and bars seemed still sort of divided between Spanish with a majority of Spanish customers and Latin Americans with a majority of Latin American costumers. Hairdressers kept open until late where you could see people chatting for hours. The majority of pedestrians at evening-night were Latin Americans. The ‘noise’ was a mixture of people milling around and Latin American music coming from shops, bars and cars. Meanwhile, and before their parents came back from their jobs, some kids of Latin American background stayed in the Refugees and Immigrants Association —FERINE— where they received support for their school homework. As said before, this big district lacks sufficient parks and open spaces where people spend the time, and many of the old houses that exist there are in dilapidated conditions, such that, spaces like the street, shops and organisations are the neighbours’ options to spend some time socialising after their jobs and school.

Returning to the subjects of this study, María Magdalena was one of the most enthusiastic voices suggesting that Hermanas Mirabal and Las Radiantes were open more hours and more days. At the beginning of her participation on the radio she was unemployed and living in a friend of her’s house in Tetuán. Her personal story is hard and it in part explains why she was very active and enthusiastic participating in the radio and other activities. She had a son living in Ecuador who had a rare illness. She monthly had to send money to her son for his medicines. She had been working in different houses as housekeepers, but had had more difficulties finding a job since the financial recession. So she daily was moving between organisations, *locutorios* and other places in search of a job and activities in order to keep her mind occupied. That is how she found Hermanas Mirabal. When she had

no job, she made some bracelets and necklets that she sold in a market that every now and then was organised in Hermanas Mirabal for women to display handmade products. So somehow Hermanas Mirabal had become a 'refuge' for her. As well, Mari and Delia, two of the Peruvian women who were participating in the workshop organised in the free-space, maintained that if the space were open longer they could participate more. They remembered the day in which they exhibited to the rest of the organisation members the work they had been doing with Elizabeth. At the time of the exhibition, only Mari was able to be in the place. Delia and Rosi arrived late since they had been doing different things around the city. Different from Mari, they did not get out and time off from the houses they lived and worked in at any time until the Thursday. So on Thursday they had to do everything they could not do otherwise; such as to send money to their relatives and talk with them in *locutorios*, do shopping, post something claimed from a relative in Peru and any other personal needs. Some weeks after this exhibition Mari and Delia asked me why the centre was not open more hours. I explained them about the limited hours to be in the building and Mari answered:

Ah! So, to come here you can't have a job and your times must be always free? (laughs). Well, if one cannot decide when it's best to come, this is more difficult.

I better understood the importance of having a radio open for more hours when I was doing fieldwork in the radio in Sydney. Since in Sydney the staff split between mornings, evenings and nights, this meant that different people could come and participate in the radio at many more hours, especially important for those who had a job. Additionally, if we compare both societies, the time limitation in Las Radiantes becomes even more unfortunate, since there is by far more movement of peoples on the streets, parks, bars, organisations and alike places on evening-nights in Madrid than in Sydney. It is worth remembering here that Las Radiantes is settled in a working class area with a high Latin American population and operates through a volunteer program. So it is not realistic to expect that the neighbours can participate during the time the council permitted the space to be open; i.e.: working hours. A schedule of this type is ignoring the fact that women in general are an incorporated segment of the labour system and furthermore, it ignores the characteristics of the kind of jobs in which women, like the Latin Americans of this study, are ethnically pigeonholed in the domestic sector, whose conditions reduce their chances to participate. Considering that the name that the council gave to the feminist space is Hermanas Mirabal—who were three activists sisters from the Dominican Republic—one would think that this name should appeal to one of the higher in number groups in the district.

Another of the limitations for Las Radiantes was the strong filters that the computer for broadcasting had in place when using the internet. The city council was the institution which provided the computer, recording table and microphones. The filters of this computer provoked many delays in the works and frustrations to find information for the programs. In addition, Las Radiantes, as an internet-radio, needed of a space to advertise the shows produced to be listened to, since Las Radiantes is not inside on the radios-dial. Yet the radio lacked an internet page or alike resource to upload their



programs. Carmen assured the participants that the council had agreed to provide a place on the city council website to advertise their programs. However, this never happened and became another reason for some women involved in the radio when it was in Ópera to leave Las Radiantes and join other group activities. Then Carmen decided to make use of the networks she had found in the committees meetings in Tetuán. Carmen had got to know about other community radios that worked in the district and further away. Mainly she had connected with Sonia, a Mexican woman from the feminist Spanish-Latin American radios net *Red Nosotras en el Mundo* (inside *Radio Vallekas*, in another working class zone of Madrid) and Lisa from the Tetuán community radio, *Radio Almenara*. Sonia went to Las Radiantes to organise a workshop, put a few recordings together and provide technical support. She taught Carmen, myself and other women who were around and joined sometimes to improve the recording and editing of the programs. And as well, she offered a solution for making public the programs produced. The Red Nosotras en el Mundo ceded a space in their website to post the programs that were submitted to free clouds. And although free clouds have a limited space, this at least made possible the visibility of the shows.

This Spanish-Latina feminist radio-net belonged to the *Unión de Radios Libres y Comunitarias de Madrid* (URLCM)—Free and Community Radios Union of Madrid. URLCM was formed in 1995 with the aim uniting heterogeneous voices from minority radios to interact together with institutions. The existence of this union brings attention to the debate between some *libre* community forms of producing radio and those of mass media. Many minority media in Madrid emerged because there were no regulation in the Spanish telecommunication sector until 2010 (see Gaya 2003, Suárez & Ferrández 2012). Although some journalists from the mass media had been claiming an overuse of radios without license of the dial, the reality is that not many of these minority radios have got licenses to broadcast so what else could they do (see Ruiz Trejo 2015). Furthermore, as Elvira Calvo explains (2011), the dial has been also invaded by pirate radios which in part are promoted by mass radios. Meanwhile European regulations have insisted their countries foster the production of media which has a non-profit character and guarantee freedom of speech and plurality of voices representations (ibid.). Yet the high bureaucratic level of Spain and Madrid and the few licenses that are granted based on the scarce available space on the dial has provoked the situation that ‘minority’ groups have started up clandestinely. However, generally speaking the attitude of Spanish society towards state control and disobedience of regulations that are considered ‘unfair’ is not seen as inappropriate behaviour and cases of informality in Spain are probably the most affluent in Europe (see Laubenthal 2007, Hellgren 2007). So faced with situations that are considered ‘unfair’, informality surges creating alternative pathways to alleviate the social inequalities and to unite voices for social change.

Carmen doubted whether joining this radio union would result in solutions for the shortcomings on the radio broadcastings. If Las Radiantes joined this union they would enjoy an internet space to which to submit the programs—for free with the option of a donation—which in turn would permit a higher production of shows. As well, since the state government had enacted a law which charges radios that

use protected music, and many community, *libre*, minority media could not afford it, minority radios facilitated the publicising of artists who upload their music on internet in a *libre* —free— form for them to use it. However, their strong connection to institutions made Carmen profoundly doubt this option and she continued hoping that the council would finally cede a space on their website. Meanwhile, another option that Las Radiantes found to publicise their works was by posting their programs on other social networks such as Facebook that, as can be seen in Peña and Pascual's study, has become a recursive element to extend the scope of radios (Peña & Pascual 2013). The interest here is that Las Radiantes switched between a formal relationship with the funding body and the informal networks to overcome the shortcomings and to give visibility to their works.

In spite of all the difficulties we have seen, Las Radiantes found diverse ways to continue with the radio activity. This is specially significant because, as we are going to see in the last part of this chapter, the voices of Latin American women in the mass media and other media in Madrid and Spain are frequently unheard or relegated to secondary importance.

#### 4. Representations of Latin Americans in Spanish media

As I have been arguing, the political identity by which Latin American women articulate their subjectivities with other women is marked by a gendered contingent sign for the political articulation of *sororidad*. Las Radiantes is thus a way to acquire autonomy in the face of the patriarchal system and to project a feminist political agenda. However, the subjectivities of Latin American women of this study are strongly marked by their gendered experiences in Madrid society in articulation with racist, sexualised and class components. Before analysing the ways in which the subjectivity of these women is incorporated into this political gendered identity, I will point out here the dominant representations that exist in the mediated spaces about Latin American peoples in general, Latin American women in particular and the Tetuán district. This will permit us to see which are the dominant messages on media that represent Latin American women inside this sexualised, class and racist construction that creates the 'Latinas' prototypes projected towards the social imaginary; and how dominant media tend to omit their voices from the mediated narrations. Hence, it is crucial to value the importance of their participation in Las Radiantes as one of the few spaces where their voices are heard.

In this aim, I am helped by the input of Stuart Hall's 'encoding and decoding model of communication' (2006). He analyses media messages as 'produced, disseminated and interpreted', and gives an active role to the audience. He states that media audiences have an important role in decoding the messages that exist on diverse types of medias, which might be capable of changing the messages through a collective voice. Whereas the process of 'encoding/decoding' a message involves a translation of that message, each individual will extract the meanings on her/his own terms; in other

words this decoding is interpreted in relation to people's cultural background, personal experiences and socio-economic position. In this process, people read into both verbal and corporeal forms of communication the stories and images of the news. One of the most interesting parts of his input is that decoding processes can involve room for resistance. Yet, importantly, as Hall explains, any society tends to impose its classifications of the social and cultural political world which constitutes a 'dominant cultural order' (2006:169). So it is appropriate to first analyse which are the dominant messages and the lack of visibility on the mediated narratives of Latin American voices, to be able to see the room for resistance of Latin American women in Las Radiantes. Based on Hall's assessment and helped by media studies in the Spanish terrain I will map some of the dominant representations of Latin American people, women and the Tetuán district in the media. This will show that much of the postcolonial character of the performance industry that we saw in the Entrecalles case, finds its correlative in these mediated representations. And as in the postcolonial narratives on films, theatre, TV-series, the voices of Latin American peoples implicated in the news are dominantly missing.

Peio Aierbe, a member of the Mugak Centre for the Study about Racism and Xenophobia, points at an important shift that arose in Spanish society regarding the 'immigrant collectives' from about 2002. Prior to 2002, published surveys showed that the attitude that Spanish society had towards 'immigration' offered the best results in Europe, since there was no special hostility towards 'immigrants' and there was an explicit rejection of forms of racism and xenophobia. However, as he explains, this situation has worsened due to the focus given by political parties to migratory issues and its reflection in the media (Aierbe 2003). From about 2002 'immigration' in relation to 'delinquency' became a trendy topic on a dominant media which used as its source information provided by parties and institutional voices, excluding from the debate the actual 'immigrants' or any related organisation. When someone who transgressed a norm was an 'immigrant', their nationality was highlighted. As well, this media presented stories that were masculinised, excluding narratives of women. When women appeared, they only did as victims of their relationship with men (*ibid.*). Since this approach identified by Aierbe offered in 2003, the tendency in mass media has been similar. However, there has been an important shift in the incorporation of women in the media narratives, in which women now appear more often, yet still in a corporeal sexualised manner.

By putting the focus primarily on the relation 'immigrant-conflict' we have seen that, as Aierbe states, although social conflicts have not increased with the rise of 'migrant' populations from the end of the 90s the repeated reporting of conflicts has risen. More recent works (see Gifreu 2006; Gifreu, Corbella, Aubia & Suárez 2006) show that this focus on 'conflicts' is also due to the unconcern of journalists to counteract the official information. In turn, this has negatively affected the perception in the population over collectives such as Latin Americans and Africans. It is interesting also to see how this perception has been focused on specific areas of the city of Madrid, in which both Tetuán and Lavapiés are considered centres of these conflicts and problematic areas for conviviality between Spanish and 'migrant' populations. As I said before, Tetuán lacks enough public spaces and gathers a

varied population by age, class and nationalities. Controversies among themselves have mainly been about the use of the public spaces, shops and alike spaces. As explained in the work of Martín Coppola and Martín Pérez (2008) the neoliberal urban planning in Tetuán has been a cause of disagreements between neighbours. While there has been a rise in building of private spaces, the lack of public ones such as parks has continued. So, the noise of music and people around until late have been reasons for disagreements, since many of the Spanish population who live in the areas of Latin American concentration are elders. Although these conflicts have a class component, they have predominantly been translated into ethnic differences in the media based on an ‘overuse of the public spaces’ by Latin Americans and their ‘excessive noise and lack of integration’. The manner in which these conflicts are portrayed by the media can be seen in the following instance. In 2013 a conflict that occurred in the Tetuán streets was ‘the reason’ for institutions to cancel one important cultural activity that annually was celebrated in Tetuán. I will present this fact as reported by three different media. The first one is a Dominican Television in Madrid, named ‘Amo Dominicana Television’ which reported on February 2013:

The General Consul of the Dominican Republic in Madrid, Dr. Frank Bencosme García, has announced that the “Big Dominican Parade” in the Tetuán district will not take place this year, since security for the thousands of citizens who traditionally meet on this national festivity cannot be guaranteed. “For the security of our people we prefer to not celebrate it. We do not want to take any risk on disputes that can endanger the lives of our people, as it happened last year. [...] Furthermore, there are many reservations from the Spanish institutions to allow this kind of events, due to what it happened in the ‘Madrid Arena’.” [Segura (2013)].

This extract of news link two well known different events that occurred in different locations the year before —2012— and took media attention. The ‘Madrid Arena’ case was an accident that occurred in November 2012 in which five Spanish youths who were assisting a concert died. ‘Madrid Arena’ is a big hall for cultural activities that belongs to the city council, yet this event was organised by a private entrepreneur. The accident brought to light possible irregularities by the management of the event that provoked the death of the five youths due to the number of assistants exceeded the capacity of the hall and emergency exits collapsed. The other event occurred in Tetuán. I will present here the second journal ‘El Mundo’ and its report of this event the year before:

A 22-year old Dominican was slightly wounded after self-harming with a cold weapon during a stampede of assistants in the celebration of the Dominican Party which is organised by the Embassy and Consulate of the Dominican Republic. This happened around 6 p.m. in the Remonta square, in the Tetuán district, in front of the Precinct.

Police said that during the party there was a stampede of assistants who were scared of a strong sound, which apparently it was provoked by firecrackers; which many of the assistants confounded with shots.

In that chaotic moment, the young man self-harmed with a cold weapon [...]

[Bécares (2012) ]

‘Madrid Arena’ and ‘Tetuán’ cases that the consul mentions in the former extract ended in different ways: the first with the death of five youths and the later with an injured person. Yet they both had different outcomes: ‘Madrid Arenas’ has continued offering concerts; and the Dominican Parade has remained cancelled in the following years. The meaning of this parade is to celebrate the independence of Dominican Republic which marks the Dominican Republic Day. As pointed out in different media, it has had an attendance of about 2,000/7,000 people from 2010 to 2012. The parade has been celebrated in the big venue of Tetuán —Bravo Murillo— and has attracted Dominicans who live there and in other parts of Madrid and Spain. It is one of the main activities organised in Tetuán around this national day. In a different manner to that in ‘El Mundo’, an online-blog in Tetuán —‘Aquí Tetuán’— that acts as a journal for the district, narrated the stampede:

About 5:30 p.m. the parade ended at the Remonta square and concerts started. [...] Once the concerts started, about 6 p.m., there was a chaos in the square. Witnesses say that two subjects got into a fight with cold weapons, shots sounded and there was stampede of the assistants that generated the chaos.

Police arrived quickly believing it was a gang affray. At 7 p.m. the Remonta square looked forlorn, completely empty and full of riot police. Meanwhile, there was a general confusion in Bravo Murillo. During half an hour, assistants talked about the existence of fights between gangs, wounded and deaths. However, as the chief of the police told to ‘Aquí Tetuán’, there was not deaths and the only harmed person self-harmed with a machete he carried while fighting.

Finally police communicated to EFE [Spanish International News Agency] that various subjects threw firecrackers, which provoked the confusion [...] The party, that it was supposed to extend for three more hours, was cancelled and the attendees continued the festivity atmosphere in Bella Vistas and Cuatro Caminos *barrios*, where the majority of Dominican population live in Madrid.

[Burgos (2012)]

One of the main differences from the coverage of ‘El Mundo’ is that ‘Aquí Tetuán’ includes the voices of the ‘neighbours’ or ‘witnesses’ and situates the stampede and injury after the parade. Importantly, ‘Aquí Tetuán’ narrates how after the police restricted in the main areas of the district, inhabitants ‘go back’ to their *barrios* to continue their festivities under less visibility. This example tells us about how these media use different elements to narrate the same fact, that are highlighted from their subheadings. ‘El Mundo’ focuses on the self-injury of a person, who in the first sentence is identified as Dominican —while the rest of media do not mention the background of that person. ‘Amo Dominicana Televisión’ focuses as well on security and includes a Dominican institutional figure —who ‘translates’ a Spanish institutional voice— in the narrative. ‘Aquí Tetuán’ however, focuses on the cancellation. ‘Amo Dominicana Televisión’ and ‘Aquí Tetuán’ offer reasons for why the parade has been cancelled that seem more related to taking precautions over the fight between two persons than a tangible danger. Importantly, it shows the confusion of the neighbours believing it was due to a ‘gang’ fight, a topic extensively repeated on mass media.

Martín Coppola and Martín Pérez in their sociological study of Tetuán highlight the frequency in which Tetuán appears in journals as a conflict area due to the quantity of Latin American population living there, which in turns has an effect on the negative perceptions of ‘immigrants’ and forms of segregation (2008: 219, 226, 228 and 248). They explain that although the district is not specially troubled, there exists an insecurity feeling that is more an effect of some media portrayals than reality. In their work they register the voices of the neighbours<sup>17</sup>, and a police representative of the district who complains about how the information the police offer about public security is portrayed in media, which it provokes feelings of insecurity in the population (2008:229). Frequently, these dominant media representations are full of stories about the so named *bandas latinas* —Latin gangs— that media locate in Tetuán, the *Barrio Latino*<sup>18</sup> and other parts of Madrid. As said in the first chapter, in 2009/2010 I researched one Latin American organisation —called ‘Latin Kings and Queens’— in Barcelona and Madrid and followed the representation of some media about the theatre and musical project that this group made (Montalvo Chaves 2012). The tendency on some media was to focus on the attributed criminal character of the group instead of their artistic project; and to position Latin women as victims of sexual abuse by the male components. Latin gangs, violence and sexual abuse as ‘rites of passage’ became trendy topics from mid-2000 on mass media after cases of disputes between youths who identified with ‘Latin gangs’. In 2007, when a famous journalist — Mercedes Milá— made a series of TV shows about ‘the criminality of Latin gangs’ including testimonies of victims the topic became specially trendy; and some of these bands started to be confused with *maras* (see López Corral 2008; Demoscopia 2007). The emphasis on these kinds of topics has not been innocuous. As shown in some research, they have had an effect on the stereotypisation of Latin Americans in Madrid and Spain as having criminality which tends to homogenise any form of Latin American groups’ meetings in public spaces (see the studies of Feixa 2007; Soriano Gática 2008; Martín Coppola & Martín Pérez 2008).

These homogenised representations of the ‘body’ of the subjects are embedded with a series of meanings inscribed with postcolonial codes of the ‘immigrant’. As explained by the sociologist Encarnación Gutiérrez, the imaginary which is produced by the media codifies ‘immigrants’ as “invaders”, ‘producing the “migrant body” as “body information”, a body created through the affective circulation of media images, policy inscriptions and political discourses’ (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010:38). Thus, ‘body’ carries significant that go further than mere information to be inscribed on political discourses or tendencies. As Stuart Hall explained, the bodies are ‘carrying’ the messages that later are decoded by the audience. In this regard, I find very shocking that in 2016, about seven years after I researched the exhibition of the artistic project of the Latin American group

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<sup>17</sup> See also the blog of one of the Tetuán neighbours who considers that the media portrait on criminal facts is exaggerated: ¿Es Tetuán un barrio peligroso? (Is Tetuán a dangerous barrio?), Burgos (2013)

<sup>18</sup> See for example: ‘Detenido un exmiembro de una banda por menudeo en el barrio latino de Tetuán’ (‘A former member of a gang arrested for retail in the *Barrio Latino* in Tetuán’) (Hidalgo 2014); and ‘Blindaje policial en el barrio latino de Tetuán: asesinatos, peleas, drogas y ruido’ (‘Police shield in the *Barrio Latino* of Tetuán: murders, fights, drugs and noise’) (Hidalgo 2016).

'Latin Kings and Queens' from Barcelona in Madrid, the pictures that then different media photographers took for this project launch are still utilised nowadays in some journal reports that talk about current 'Latina gangs' in Spain. I reckon that these pictures have become archival photos as a source. Yet it is disturbing to see how their 'bodies', these images, have been classified-encoded into messages about criminality and 'Latina gangs'; in spite of these photos being taken during the launch of an artistic project that has nothing to do with current conflicts.

An extensive study which also sees in the 'body' a strategy to encode messages is the work of the linguist Tetun A. van Dijk about the representations of 'migrants' in Spanish journals (2005). Van Dijk is one of the founders of the 'Critical Analysis of the Discourse' interdisciplinary approach, which is based on the works of social science scholars such as Stuart Hall, Foucault, Bourdieu, Gramsci et. al., which examine the ideology and power relations that are embedded in discourses. From this perspective, van Dijk shows in his work that Spanish media and institutions employ a strategy of the 'negative other-presentation' and 'positive self-presentation'. He asserts that media representations become one of the most powerful tools of 'anti-immigrant discourses' and institutional policies (2005:28). In order to legitimise and justify immigration laws and restrictions on the use of space, encoded 'bodies' and images are translated 'as particularly violent, and hence its participants as intolerable in a peaceful country like Spain' (2005: 29). Yet as well, 'the negative other-presentation' includes a discourse of victimhood by which the police —read Spanish institutions— appear in the narratives as 'saviour of immigrants'. All these portraits have a postcolonial character in that it is all about the 'immigrants' vis-à-vis the 'national'. As said by Liliana Suárez and Alicia Ferrández, the representations of victim and criminal present them as a 'problem' that is dualised in categories that dominate the symbolic imagery, such as 'natives' vs 'outsiders', 'legal' vs 'illegal', 'rich' vs 'poor', 'developed' vs 'underdeveloped', 'Europeans' vs 'people of colour' (Suárez & Ferrández 2012:80). It is usually only media that van Dijk understands as positioned on the 'Left' which tends to be less hostile to 'immigration', while also taking a more paternalistic position (van Dijk 2005:34).

In relation to Latin American women we said that their voices are even more unheard. When narratives cover them, there is a tendency to focus on women trafficking, thus 'adding an important gender dimension to the strategy of 'negative other-presentation' (van Dijk 2005: 43). These sorts of strategies have also a postcolonial component in the way that Latin American women have been sexualised and exoticised in the narratives in history. As in the old colonial descriptions of 'India' women by coloniser's narratives, the exotic passage of sex workers distinguishes these women as 'morally inferior' and excludes an implicit group from the news: Spanish men (2005: 43). Furthermore, these sexualised representations present 'immigrant' women in a passive manner before sexual exploitations. The interesting —or the saddest— of these representations is that even though their voices are usually unheard on media, the encoded 'ethnic and sexualised bodies' are used in pictures and videos on TV news. At best, they appear with a blurred face to maintain some privacy. However, there are a few news segment that include other voices of Latin American women in other

sectors, such as the domestic one, who, as we will see, is one of the most vulnerable sectors in the society. This situation is compounded by the scarce attention that this sector receives and the insulation of these jobs, in which, as I have said several times, they frequently only have one day-off or even less.

In many of the works I have been mentioning, is pointed the rise of Latin American media from the 1990s, surging as a counterpoint to the lack of visibility of voices on mainstream media. In this regard, the extended thesis based on research with Latin American radios that Marisa Ruiz realised in Madrid explains that these radios have become an instrument to develop a 'Latin America' agency and identity as prolocutors and as pressure groups against exclusions in Spain (2014:89, and 2015). Nonetheless, as her work shows, these radios are not exempt from also reproducing a series of historical differences: firstly, they do not clearly incorporate Indigenous and African elements into the 'Latin identity', and as well, they do tend to reproduce patriarchal roles (Ruiz Trejo 2015; see also Suárez Navaz 2011a; and 2011b). In this sense, the attempt to build a gendered political identity of *sororidad* in Las Radiantes can be specially attractive for women who have experienced situations that are gender conditioned. To counteract the role these women have been assigned in diverse media is as a 'passive audience', they are taking, by following Stuart Hall, the room provided in Las Radiantes to decode their bodies and the mediated narratives into new messages through a collective and active voice. Nonetheless, it will be necessary to observe how their subjectivities, their differences with other women in the radio and the feminist organisation are incorporated into this sisterhood, an exercise that involves a break with cognitive postcolonial borders.



## Chapter Five: Diverse ways to present resistance through the radio

In the last chapter we have seen that there are diverse obstacles to be overcome for Latin American women to make their voices heard on the radio; for the radio itself to consolidate; and the lack of visibility in other media. However, despite this, we have seen how they manage to appropriate the radio and utilise it for their own concerns, mainly anonymously. This chapter will show a more visible ethnography containing the stories and names of the protagonists of the radio that leads into a discussion about the incorporation of diverse subjectivities into the feminist political identity of *sororidad*. Following critical feminist theorists (Mama et. al. 2013; hooks 1992; hooks et al. 2004; Lugones 2008; Haraway 1995; Butler 2008; Suárez Navaz & Hernández Castillo 2008; Hernández Castillo 2003; Hernández Castillo & Suárez Navaz 2004; Moreton-Robinson 2003b, 2012), I want to emphasize that resistance to gender power can take many forms insofar as these powers present themselves in different intersectioned forms with “race”, class and other social markers. As discussed in previous chapters, articulated political identities are subjective and collective in relation to shared experiences that result from relations of power; so that it will be necessary to identify diverse ways ‘to be feminist’ through diverse ways ‘to resist gender powers’. This will need to include a postcolonial perspective that takes into account the colonial and racial legacy in the power relations, and a transnational one, to see the manner in which the construction of ‘other’ identities, such as the Indigenous are re-articulated in the migratory context and the shared feminist identity.

The labour context in which the majority of Latin American women in Las Radiantes work, that is, the domestic, marks a difference from other women in the feminist organisation, by their experiences in, as I will further explain, the racialisation and colonality of their labour. Such that, the voices of these Latin American women are part of a subjectification of ‘being feminist’ that is exposed in the radio. In this regard, just as the word ‘woman’ cannot be understood as a rigid category constructed under universalism, the word ‘feminist’ cannot correspond only to a unique and universal manner to present resistance to patriarchy. Rather, there are many diverse ways to present a ‘feminist resistance’ insofar as gender power relations present themselves in an intersectioned manner with other powers. This is very relevant specially considering that, as we will see, the actions of Latin American women come at times to be understood as passive and labeled by other feminists as lacking enough ‘feminist language’. As Lila Abu-Lughod argues, insofar as power relations take many forms we should learn to read various local and everyday resistances ‘not just by arguing for the dignity or heroism of the resisters but by letting their practices teach us about the complex interworking of historically changing structures of power’ (Abu-Lughod 1990:50). Taking from this, my argument is that by appreciating diverse creative forms of resistance, this will enable us to appreciate diverse forms of ‘being feminist’.

Thus, the centre of the analysis is directed towards three main points in this chapter:

- 1) The exposition of the women’s feelings on the radio’s shows and a video production, which will show how much the labour system in Spain has incorporated old colonial cognitive constructions

of the Other, based on sexualised, gendered and racist divisions. The approach towards the feminisation of labour in Spain facilitates an understanding of the colonial legacy in the context of political economy by which Latin American women are inscribed in one of the most devalued and vulnerable sectors.

- 2) An analysis of their searches of spaces from which to project their voices in their tours through other feminist organisations until getting to Las Radiantes. Seeing the scarce attention that some feminist and immigrant organisations in Madrid give to the concerns of these women, it will uncover other reasons why these women find little room to expose their claims.
- 3) An analysis of the boundaries in the articulating of the feminist political identity in Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal. The manner in which diverse subjectivities are incorporated into the feminist identity reveals that, as Judith Butler argues, ‘coalitional politics requires either an expanded category of ‘women’ or an internally multiplicitous self’ (Butler 2001:352). In other words, the at times universalism by which the term ‘feminist’ is defined inside this identity hinders a real position of equality between diverse women.

The results of all of these aspects present the very urgent need in Spanish society to provide more legal and mediated resources for one of the most disadvantaged and invisible groups in Spanish society. Yet overall, it shows the ability of these women to claim room and include their subjectivities inside the feminist political identity of *sororidad* built in Las Radiantes. Because this radio, to greater or lesser extent, has been one of the few spaces where these women got to project their voices.

## 1. Communicating with the ‘outside’ through radio

The radio did not have a fixed program guide; programs were proposed by Carmen in consultation with the volunteers. As I have explained before, due to the many difficulties of running the radio, the number of programs that Las Radiantes got to record while I was there did not exceed ten. Yet during this time, the attempt of the Latin American women who were involved in the radio and those who occasionally participated was, to a greater or lesser extent, to direct the shows towards subjects related to their concerns. So, Cecilia, María Magdalena and others, seized any opportunity to exteriorise their subjectivities. In this sense, María Magdalena assumed a ‘leader’ role inside the radio by transmitting the ‘voices’ of other Latin American women who were working in the domestic sector in Madrid. One of the first ideas for a show in the radio that Carmen proposed was to record a program about ‘Women and work’ in a general way. Then María Magdalena quickly volunteered to get information about women from the Tetuán district. Meanwhile, Carmen, Cecilia and I got in charge of getting more statistic and legislative data about employment rates and similar information. At the next meeting, María Magdalena took a paper from her bag and read a manifesto she had written about Latin American women from Tetuán whom she had interviewed. All of them were working in domestic service. The manifesto was mainly full of emotions and feelings occasioned by their working

conditions, like those we are going to see in this chapter. The interest here is to see the attempt of M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena to include the subjectivities, feelings, of Latin American women in the radio through this program. This manifesto could not be recorded in the end due to a series of personal vicissitudes that she dealt with and that I will shortly explain. However, I want to pause here to examine the form of resistance that this act is showing, regardless of whether it was recorded or not. The work that Lila Abu-Lughod did with Bedouin women constitutes a helpful theoretical frame to understand it.

Lila Abu-Lughod focuses her analysis on a variety of creative practices that Bedouin women employ to resist patriarchal domination. She explains that studies about resistance have largely had an aura of romanticism towards those subjects and have focused on actions which seem heroic. Further, since ‘heroes’ tend to be identified as masculine figures, women like these Bedouin women have been an object of many fewer studies of resistance. As she argues, ‘gender power seems to be one of the more difficult forms of power to analyse’ (1990:42). So, she suggests a way to draw away from the romanticism perspective and proposes to look more at those practices that are not seen as ‘heroic’. This perspective seems very pertinent to analyse the case of the women of this thesis who, let’s remember, belong to one of the most devalued sectors of the society according to racial, class and gender hierarchies that operate in the labour system; and who in addition, find little room to express themselves. To explain how much romantic appreciations about forms of resistance should shift, Abu-Lughod takes Foucault’s input —‘no matter how terrifying a system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings’ (Foucault 2001:135)— and inverts it. Thus, she proposes an approach which is specially useful for ethnographic studies, which says that ‘where there is resistance, there is power’. By identifying resistance in its wide and varied creative forms beyond the representation of heroes, we can see power relations of modern states and capitalist economies. So the following ethnography shows that the way that Latin American women use the radio is telling us about forms of resistance to intersectioned oppressive forms, regardless of the many difficulties they find to expand their voices. Further, it will show that their involvement in the radio was constrained by their working conditions.

I will return to following the meetings in Las Radiantes after María Magdalena wrote the manifesto. She kept assisting at the radio until a series of problems made it difficult for her continued participation. On the 14th of February, she did not come to the radio, so Carmen called her several times but she did not answer:

Carmen: This is very strange, because she comes to the activities most of the times, and when she can’t make it, she calls us to notify it. She didn’t come this morning either. And she had registered for the activity of this morning.

The next week she was in Las Radiantes. When I arrived she was explaining to Carmen she was ill, with a respiratory infection. She had got a job the week before as housekeeper in the house of a upper class Spanish family. Yet on her first days working there she got ill due to her room conditions:

M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena: I'm sleeping in a small room which is the heating boiler room of the house. And when I'm sleeping I sweat a lot. That's why I've got sick. It's hell inside that room; it's too hot. I have told my boss that I want a better room. I can't sleep there. It's unhealthy. It's a big house, they have many rooms! They should give me another one. But I'm still waiting,...

Carmen: And have you gone to the doctor?

M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena: Yes, I went to the hospital emergency the other day. But a doctor in the hospital can't give me the sick leave. And I don't have a GP.

As I said in the last chapter, the health coverage in Spain has been gradually reduced by the austerity policies, which explains why she could not attend a GP. A few days later I met her again while assisting at a performance of the theatre group of 'Hermanas Mirabal'. She explained that she was again living in her friend's house:

I'll go back again to work when I recover. I don't like this job,..., because my boss is so... She doesn't want to pay me the days I've been working before getting sick. I don't have sick leave, I don't have a written contract and she doesn't want to pay me. She says that she will start to pay me from the moment I got back to work. She is so... I know that in the last 4 months five different women have quit this job in that house because they couldn't deal with her. But what can I do? I don't want to work as internal worker anymore. I don't like this kind of jobs! But this is the only thing I have. And I have to send the money for my son's medicine!

A few weeks later she went back to work. She was working everyday of the week, enjoying only two free hours a day to go out from the house. In those two hours she used to go Las Radiantes and other activities in the centre. Yet again, after sleeping in the same room, she got the same health problems. The last time I saw her in the radio I asked her if she would come back to the next meeting in the radio:

I don't know. I will ask my boss to let me use the two free hours to come here. I don't like this kind of job. I'm applying for other kind of jobs, but if I don't get anything I might have to go back to Ecuador. It's just I want to finish my esthetician course before I leave. With that course I can get a good job in Ecuador. In Ecuador, if you say that you have studied in Spain, it's easier to get a job. And my plans are to go back to Ecuador, to work there until I get enough money and then to take my son to the U.S. Because there are doctors in the U.S. who can help my son.

Next week she did not come. Carmen and I called her several times; I emailed her. Yet we got no answer. She did not attend Las Radiantes anymore while I was there. When I went back to Spain from Australia, I got to know through Carmen that she had gone back to Ecuador. Her case constitutes a good instance of what her manifesto about her feelings and other anonymous women are telling us about the relations of power operating in the labour system through private houses. In the private households the legacies of the colonial order are reactivated through racial and gendered segregations

that seem to be an effect of individual relationships but respond to an articulation with the dehumanising migration policies and institutional vulnerability.

During the last decades diverse scholars have stressed the importance of Latin American women in the context of the political economy of Spain in which they supply care to the gaps left by the state in social service programs after the growing incorporation of Spanish women into the labour system and as an effect of the rise of the Spanish economy in the 90s (see for instance Gregorio Gil 2004). Whereas the first waves of Latin American migrations (from about the 70s) were from more opulent sectors of society (see Escrivá 2007) and some of them got positions in health centres and public administration, the 90s augmented the migration of more devalued social-economic sectors (see Oso Casa 2007). Once in Spain, they have also occupied devalued sectors such as domestic and sex jobs, reproducing an articulated logic of class, ethnicity and gender that exists in the ex-colonies and situates Indigenous-descendent and Afro-descendent as one of the most disadvantaged groups. In these times, their incorporation into the labour market was relatively quick in part motivated by a shared language of women from former colonies. In addition, these women initiated a chain of transnational migration, assuming a leadership that has had important effects in both their original countries and Spain, with remittances and family reunifications.

Various academic works have highlighted the importance of this feminisation of transnational migration from Latin American countries, such as those of Ubaldo Martínez Veiga (2000) and Gioconda Herrera (2011). The work of Ubaldo Martínez Veiga is focused on Dominican women arriving in Spain from the 90s who have dominantly been employed in the domestic service in the house of Spanish families in Madrid. Martínez Veiga explains how these women have built a flowing transnational net of information, resources and services, initiating the first migrations to later help other family members and friends in their home country to go to Spain and find jobs. Meanwhile, the work of Gioconda Herrera has focused on female migration from Andean countries to Spain. Similar to Martínez Veiga, she stresses that the migration from Andean countries has been led by women who later fostered chains of family reunification (Herrera 2011: 88-89). And as well, she signals that these women, in the majority, went to occupy domestic works for three main reasons: the dynamics of the labour market of Spain; the migratory policies that facilitated work visa-permits for domestic jobs; and the weak institutional structure of public services for child and elderly care (2011:90). As Martínez Veiga signals, the working conditions in this sector tend to be hard, with many working-hours/day and frequent abusive treatment by the employers. Inside the domestic sector, the internal domestic worker is the most disadvantaged since they tend to receive a lower wage. In addition, this kind of job, with so many hours inside a house, produces such isolation from the rest of the society that they have been described as ‘a sort of “cast of invisible women” without any possibility to come to light’ (Martínez Veiga 2000:34).

To approach this fact from a more critical colonial perspective will help to determine the racist and gendered logics that operates in here. The works of Liliana Suárez (2004) and Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2010) offer interesting inputs in relation to postcoloniality in the domestic service sector. Liliana Suárez states that domestic service has been designed under ‘stereotypes rooted in colonial and racist models’ based on docile, delicate and sexual attributions to non-Occidental women (Suárez 2004: 308). These attributions are marked by a corporeal distinction of the ‘Other’ working in the less valued and unprotected sectors. In spite of this, as both Gutiérrez-Rodríguez and Suárez note, domestic service has become one of the most feasible ways to regularise ‘undocumented migrants’, though the regularisation of workers does not remove their precarious legal conditions. Although Spain is one of the very few countries in Europe where the household service sector is regulated by a social security regime which includes health care and minimum wages, this only applies to regularised—documented—migrants. The regularisation of these people depends on the good will of the employer, who also is usually the dominant actor who imposes the working conditions. Yet even for those who get to be regularised, this legal framework has a limited coverage, because households are considered by the state to be a ‘private sphere’, inasmuch as employment relations are individually and orally negotiated by a verbal contract (2010:4). Thus, cases such as Magdalena show the inability and unprotected position they have in the face of negotiations with their bosses. As Encarnación states, we should understand this relationship between employers and employees as a result of the fusion of ‘modernity/coloniality’ in the way that capital acts in the private sphere. Although capital is not an organiser of domestic work, ‘it extracts the productivity generated through this labor and its social relations’ (2010:42). Social services that are not covered by the state, and the ignoring by unions and international labour organisation in both Spain and Europe, place these women as more defenseless.

The great work of Encarnación Gutiérrez reveals that these conditions correspond to forms of governmentality that merge with migration regimes, the feminisation and the coloniality of labor and the racialisation of domestic work. Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality (1991) reveals the state impacts on the private sphere through a variety of institutional measures and procedures by which the population is an object of control and also knowledge, hence operating through the rationalities of people. Thus governmentality becomes a way to decentralise old forms of governing in the sovereign power through multidirectional power on at least three levels: the governing of the moral self; the governing of the family and political governing. Encarnación Gutiérrez endorses this account and puts the migration policies and the racialised and gendered segregation of the labour market as the “underside of governmentality” (2010:72). She utilises the already mentioned work of Walter Mignolo (2008)—also Foucault and Anzaldúa influenced—and points to the segregation and coloniality existing inside European borders towards peoples coming from former colonies and East Europe deemed the Others of Europe. If we remember, this is in line with the explanation by Verena Stolcke (1995) about European fundamentalism by which the word ‘immigrant’ came to refer to those arriving from former colonies and countries considered ‘inferior’. Thus, Encarnación Gutiérrez states that this coloniality inside Europe operates in the domestic sector through strict, racist and

deshumanising migratory policies in articulation with a gendered division of labour. Yet governmentality is the decisive factor in how the migratory policies are directed :

While they implicitly complement the self-governing strategies of the household members, repressive migration policies aiming to restrict, prevent and negate the movement of non-EU citizens within the EU do not govern through the rationales or mentalities of the population on which these measures are imposed. Governmentality becomes significant only in regard to the policy makers. It is their concepts of the “alien” and “Europe’s Other” reflecting the coloniality of power that shines through here. These colonial mentalities governing the projected racialized and gendered Other of Europe are mobilized (Gutiérrez 2010:72).

It is significant here to signal that, as Encarnación Gutiérrez explains, the way that political debates around the ‘immigrant figure’ are exposed on media contributes to the hostile climate in which the ‘migrant’ is treated with suspicion by national policy makers. We could add that, in the case of domestic workers —specially those who work internally— there exists also a sort of unconcern and invisibility, reflected also in the media. Most telling is that the state and the individual households who employ these women benefit from the situation because it makes the social reproduction of the employer cheaper and creates productivity in two senses: 1) It facilitates the incorporation of Spanish —of middle class— male and female to the sphere of production; 2) The productivity by the domestic worker contributes to the capital accumulation without producing any costs for the state (Gutiérrez 2010:72-73). This complex panorama demonstrates which are the power relations and capitalist economies operating in cases such as that of María Magdalena, who, by writing a manifesto about the feelings that this situation provoked in her, was presenting a clear form of rebellion against them. Beyond these power relations, it is important to note the transnational connection of these women who, like Magdalena, are frequently linked to their home countries by some dependency such as that of her son. Moreover, due to the rise of unemployment rates in the country since the financial recession, M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena will have had to accept worse working conditions due to less job availability and her need to send the remittances. All of this stimulates a series of feelings that somehow have been projected in the radio, with the manifesto that María Magdalena wrote and another media productions that follow.

## 2. ‘Exit’, video production of Las Radiantes: feelings and bodies that come to light

Some of the ideas for programs that were proposed for the radio did not materialise. As said before, the main reasons are that those women who proposed them stopped attending the radio for work-related reasons as María Magdalena and the radio worked with little means. Yet some of the projects came to fruition, and the thoughts, memories, feelings of some of them remained in the radio in recorded forms. One of the most successful in this sense and which got more visibility was a short-film that Bea directed while she was the director of the radio in Lavapiés: *‘Exit. Un corto a la*

*carta*' (Silvestre & Santiago 2012). Las Radiantes got extra funding from various institutions to film it and to pay a wage to the more than a hundred people that got involved in it. The short was launched in a centre of cultural creation by the city council named 'El Matadero'. This short-film tells the stories of Latin American, Equatorial Guinean and East European women in Madrid, performed by themselves. Most of the non-fiction narrations in it, reproduce similar live stories that members of Las Radiantes have had while in Madrid. It tells about feelings; about being invisible inside the legal frameworks while being 'locked' inside houses; and adventures to get social mobility. And further, about how social meanings are embedded in their 'bodies' and 'feelings'. For the analysis of this short-film I will follow the work of Federico Besserer (2000) about the feelings of Indigenous migrant women from Latin America. He offers an interesting approach which explains how a emotional order by the state power over the family structure sustains social inequalities. Structures of power, such as traditions and institutions, uses regime of feelings by which masculine feelings are seen as rational while women feelings are seen as irrational and inappropriate. This regime 'forces' women to feel obligated to fulfill family's obligations and carer roles. In the case of Indigenous, worker, transnational women, this regime acts through the logic of coloniality and feminisation of labour as explained before. Besserer's approach will help me to analyse how the relation of power operates in the 'bodies' and 'minds' of Latin American women who work in the domestic sector; and further whether their subjectivities and feelings are included inside the feminist political identity. Thus, for this aim, the analysis should start from the exposition of their feelings as expressions of resistance, then keep identifying the relations of power that operate in a transnational manner.

In the last chapter we have seen how many women from the Tetuán district approached the radio with an interest to search for support. Yet other women were just looking for a feminist space to continue their experiences in feminist organisations as they did in their home countries. The meetings and activities inside Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal frequently became a sort of refuge where people shared their problems and concerns with other women. Days working on the radio became "therapy" meetings for probably everyone or a way to find solutions. The radio was in a small room which was not soundproof, with two tables, four microphones and earphones and a small control realisation radio. Close to that room there was the psychologist room so it was possible sometimes to hear women who arrived looking for assistance and to hear them crying. There were cases of sexist violence or similar forms of abuse. Yet I specially heard cases of women like Maria Magdalena who were victims of forms of labour abuse. I heard them yet I did not see them; a case which is not uncommon. There is some exposure in feminist organisations and academic conferences of the forms of exploitation over domestic workers and sex workers. However, these debates rarely include the voices of those who are affected and their bodies and voices remain in the shadow while some academic transmits their stories. My attempt here is to avoid being 'the person' who transmits their voices. Instead, I am trying to look at where these women have a voice, to look at their capacity and possibilities for expression, by making the analysis from their emotions.



From the time I attended the radio, around 2013, the number of investigations about the traffic of people from Latin America, Africa and East Europe for sexual or domestic exploitation increased. This attracted some media attention and some cases of internal domestics became more relevant. The investigations included the complaints of the affected and police, associations and NGOs reports. As the NGO for refugees in Spain —Accem— and the investigation of ‘Fundación Sur’ reports signal, one of the biggest obstacles for these women is to find a way to report the facts. If they report it, there is no guarantee that they will not be expelled from the country; if they do it, they risk being unable to find future jobs and so having the pressure from their families who demand remittances. As the report highlights, there are cases in which women are unable to move from the houses since their abusers take their passports and they are forced to work on care, cleaning or prostitution. As the result of different forms of abuse, they frequently become mentally affected due to the constant humiliations they suffer. This adds to the impossibility to act inside private sectors, since, as mentioned before, arrangements between ‘contractors’ and ‘employees’ occur in private households where institutions do not interfere (see these reports in Lucas 2015). These conditions seem the most contemporary reproduction of ‘invisible slavery’ that as Encarnación Gutiérrez states, are ‘an expression and impression of global inequalities’ in which the ‘intersections of “race”, gender and class have been reshuffled’ (2010: 2) .

The short film ‘Exit’ brings to light the situations described here. There are cases of isolation in houses, cultural and language misunderstanding, sexual abuse and exploitation, deportation, women sleeping in parks and as in Entrecalles, cases of actors who play stereotyped roles on the film industry or busk on the streets and metro. In sum, it brings to light the situation of many women who approached Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal. Yet as well it shows the success of women who have managed to escape from those situations. Interestingly, these women who perform in the film exchange their roles, so that some form of anonymity remains at the same time as the social agents appear on the scenes. It is an interactive film in which the spectator chooses which way to follow. The initial sequence presents a Latin American woman arriving at Madrid’s airport. From there the spectator chooses between two options when the question ‘¿Qué harías en su lugar?’ — ‘What would you do if you were her?’— appears on the screen. This determines the following scenes or stories of other women who continue the narrative, until getting to one of the eight possible endings which define different social, cultural and economic realities that ‘immigrant’ women face when looking for a job.

I will return here to the case of Noemí, one of the first members of the radio when it was founded in Lavapiés, who participated in the video ‘Exit’. As in many of the interviews that I did with the women of the radio, when I interviewed her she took the chance to express what she wanted, ‘ignoring’ some of my questions and directing the interview towards what she wanted to talk about: her feelings. If we remember, Noemí is a woman of Kichwa background who was employed by an upper class Ecuadorian family who moved to Madrid. The family situation that she faced in Quito, her social class

position, the important cultural shock that she had once in Madrid and her working conditions made her situation specially hard when she settled:

I had my first daughter in Ecuador, when I was 25. And 13 years later, I had the second. It's very complicated to work when you have kids because my situation was,... I couldn't pay for someone to look after my daughters. So I lost my job. And my husband wasn't a responsible person, who drank too much. We, Latina women put up with these situations instead of looking for a divorce. Then I contacted this family and they gave me the job. But they told me that if I accepted I had to move with them in the future to Spain. And it was an exciting idea! Because at that time, in 2000s, everybody came to here, they got a lot of money and sent it to Ecuador. And as I lived in a very popular [lower classed] barrio in Quito, I saw many people of that barrio who were building good houses with the money sent from some relative in Spain. So I took the job.

I arrived here in 2006. The good moments<sup>19</sup> here were ending. And the first change here was the weather. It was raining when I arrived. We went to the house and I couldn't sleep or anything. I never rested. I woke up at 6 a.m. as I did in Ecuador and I started to work, trying not to make noise. The house was very old, with big windows, it was very cold, and we had heaters. And I didn't know where was the heat coming from! (laughs). I never stopped cleaning. I went to sleep about 11-12 p.m. But I couldn't sleep. I didn't have a side table or a light on my room; to read. So I left the light on the ceiling on. My boss came and told me: 'C'mon Noemí, it's time to sleep'. Bu I couldn't sleep. And I started to feel bad. I was getting crazy. So I told my bosses about it and they said: 'You should have thought about it before coming. We told you very clearly that you had to control this. That we didn't want to see tears. You're an adult. Be mature. And if you don't like it, you can go back to Ecuador'. And that made me cry. I didn't want to go back. Because, to come here was also a way to,..., a way to escape. My husband was an alcoholic, he didn't work. But the problem was for my daughters. I left them with..., that burden; with him. Although they stayed with his mother. But I couldn't go back, because I didn't have a job in Ecuador. I use to call my daughters on Thursdays, and then they used to tell me things like: 'What are you doing there? You have to come back. He's drinking too much... You are very happy there, going to discotheques instead of working while we're here with him'. And things like that. It was a very hard situation. And I couldn't talk to anyone about this.

We can see a pattern of feelings operating in diverse ways here. The work of Teresa del Valle (2000) who also analyses how the regime of feelings operates on different genders inside patriarchal societies explains the situation that Noemí faced. As she reveals, since childhood, structures of power operate through formal and informal education over the body and the feelings of girls, such that girls are differently educated to boys to feel obligated to assume care as 'mothers' and 'wives'. Hence, guilt is fostered if they do not fulfill the expected role of 'carer'. The transnational connection with Noemí's

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<sup>19</sup> The financial recession in Spain was starting to be evident around the time she arrived.

family and Ecuador forces her to feel guilty in respect to her family awaiting her remittances and her fulfillment in 'mother and wife roles'. Yet also, the pattern of feelings is operating in the way her bosses regarded the exposition of her feelings as rendering her inadequate for the job. This situation became more frustrating for Noemí since her working conditions worsened once they moved to Madrid:

I had to wear cloth [uniform] that I didn't when I was in Ecuador. I couldn't talk with guests they had in the house. And that never happened when we were in Ecuador. But once we were here, my bosses became more,... more arrogant with me.

I didn't talk with anyone. Because there, where we were living, there was no Latino. I didn't know anyone. I stayed with this family for seven months. But we argued one day, because I told them I was feeling bad and also my salary wasn't good. In Ecuador, when they had a dinner with guests, they paid me an extra fee. But here, no. And my salary was €520/month. We had a big argument and I left them... I left the house and I ended in a park, crying, by myself, because I didn't know anyone.

This sort of situations and the accumulation of emotions that they provoke have been projected in the short-film of 'Exit'. What this short-film shows is a subjectivisation of the feelings provoked in Noemí and other women like her as a result of a series of power relations; and further, how they invert these feelings to project resistance through a gendered political identity projected in the video. This inversion happens by shifting the patriarchal logics that position immigrant, Indigenous women's as irrational and inappropriate. Similar to Teresa del Valle, Federico Besserer explains how power structures through traditions and institutions, in order to execute governance, employ a regime of feelings that 'force' them to assume roles as 'carers' of family members and to maintain shipment of remittances no matter how. This regime is designed from a masculine and interested perspective. Yet once women express rational feelings that subvert the order, that organise resistance, those feelings are considered inadequate. However, as Besserer states, reasonings emerge within emotions; or conversely, emotions that are produced by their subjugation lead to reasoning. So that, feelings and reasons are interconnected and directed towards social change. For those who are in power, these feelings are invisible, devalued, because they are considered *subjectivity constructions*. However, feelings are what determine the re-building of identities inside a migratory context, the motor of the reasoning. Noemí's feelings are considered inappropriate for the role she has been adjudged in the society, being forced to suppress them. Those feelings are the result of the embedment in her body and mind of social meanings; i.e. her body is 'colonised' by a series of sexual and racial oppressions in the domestic sector and her mind registers the feelings that provoke that subjugation. Yet by exposing those feelings on videos like 'Exit' she is stimulating a de-colonisation of her body and mind.

Feelings are 'sensations and bodily reactions' and significantly are 'stretching and reaffirming, power relations' in which 'the mind moves the body as the body moves the mind' (Gutiérrez 2010:5); thus, facilitating the social agenda. As Encarnación Gutiérrez states, domestic work is not only badly paid

or under bad conditions, but those doing it 'are feminized and racialised subjects considered as "inferior" to the hegemonic normative subjects' (2010:15). Or by going back to Besserer, their emotions are considered inappropriate, constructed under an 'inferior subjectivity' in 'inferior bodies'. The considerations of inferiority are those which embed the bodies of these women with devaluating colonial meanings that are reproduced inside a migratory language and provoke a bunch of emotions. To make the world aware of their feelings and their rights is a way to foster social change and it needs to have more exposure in media and the society in general. By these means, these women are finding pathways to foster a change of the social established order. When I requested to watch the film 'Exit' in Las Radiantes Bea and Carmen decided to give me a copy: 'Give it visibility, Ángeles!', they told me.

The most interesting aspect of this 'Exit' video for the case of Noemí is that this is the only place she found to project her voice. Afterwards Noemí left the family she was working with, she found another job with a Spanish family thanks to the support of the members of a church she found refuge. Although her salary slightly augmented to €650, her feelings and working conditions did not improve much and she started to look for the assistance and support in some organisations until she found Las Radiantes. I will describe in the next sections the experiences of Noemí and other women when looking for that support in other organisations.









### 3. 'It was like talking to the wind'. Finding ways to project their voices

At the beginning I didn't go out from the house. I heard talk about papers, but I didn't know what was that. But then I started to go to parks and sat down for a few hours but I always went back home before it got dark, because I was scared. I met some women like me. They told me about a [feminist] organisation where you can take courses. So I went there and I enrolled in a

computer course. I couldn't enroll in more courses because they asked me for a NIE [Identity for Foreigners Number]. And I only had the passport. But there I met other women like me who had no place to go. And I got to know that other domestic workers were like me: seven months locked in a house. My bosses never talked about regularising my job. So, some women have been three, four years locked without regularisation, without health coverage. And while one is healthy, it doesn't matter. But when you get sick, you need professional help. And I used to tell the people in that organisation 'We have to do something. We have to organise, to talk about how we feel, our problems,..' But *it was like talking to the wind* [Noemí].

Noemí went to this organisation once she was working with the second family. As other women whom I talked with, she approached this organisation looking for emotional, legal and labour support. As we have seen, to expose their feelings is fundamental for their social agenda, because feelings are the motor of the reasoning that fosters social change. These organisations constitute a chance for them to claim and make visible the situation in which they are, because many of them only can spend a few hours outside the houses they work in. Whereas before we have seen that the feelings and subjectivities of migrant women are inferiorised responding to governmental structure of power that creates an order of feelings, we will see now how this pattern of feelings falls also within some organisations that work with 'migrant' women; organisations that receive diverse institutional support through funding and which are run by both Spanish and Latin American women. By analysing the feelings of other women like Noemí and their tour around diverse organisations, we will see that at times the politics of integration and intervention activities for 'immigrant' women in these organisations *sustain* the coloniality and feminisation of labour instead of *breaking with* it. This can be perceived in a series of courses that these organisation offer for 'immigrant' women, which are directed towards their specialisation in the domestic sector. The complexity here is that while their feelings were ignored or inferiorised, the answer they got was an offer to develop more skills to maintain their role in that sector; a sector, that operates in strong racial terms. However, this has not discouraged some women from keeping on looking for ways to project their voices and feelings.

All my informants claimed that in a big proportion of organisations they contacted, they were offered to participate solely in courses directed to the domestic sector: courses to learn to cook Spanish food, to iron, carpentry and alike. As in the case of Noemí, when they do not have a NIE their participation in other courses was restricted. This sets a direction for these women towards the domestic sector and their role inside the society, while making more difficult their incorporation into other sectors. In fact, in Hermanas Mirabal I heard their staff complaining about other organisations that insisted on directing these women to domestic jobs: 'We had a woman from Colombia who was a nurse and we were providing her the contacts to take a complementary course in Madrid that would facilitate her to work as a nurse. Because she had to validate her studies in Spain. But the organisation which was providing her accommodation and had 'sent' her to us insisted that she had to start to work on the

domestic service asap. And the problem is, if they start to work there, then later it's very difficult to move, because they almost don't go out from those houses. We got it in the end, but it was difficult'. Two Latin American women in Las Radiantes also reported that if 'you reject to work in houses, they don't help you anymore because they say you're lazy and don't want to work'. In these cases it seems that some organisations come to continue with formal directions to maintain a postcolonial racialisation of labour of subjects who seem to have been 'designed' to play an unique role in the realm of the capital system.

An edited book of Francisco Checa, Juan Carlos Checa and Ángeles Arjona about migratory population living in Spain (2000a) offers a series of findings that are relevant for this case. Checa, Checa and Arjona's study shows that these strategies of 'integration' as they have been designated in Spain are done under neo-racist differentiators which assume that the culture of 'Others' is inferior (2000b:238). As the authors explain, political parties and institutional voices tend to consider 'integration' as a responsibility of the 'immigrants' and offer a series of tools that foster acculturation. In this same book, we can find a study that María García-Cano has done with organisations that are locally, regionally and nationally funded, to identify the strategies of integration of 'immigrant' women. As her work shows, these types of training courses have been designed as a panacea to facilitate their integration into Spanish society through 'labour integration'. Yet are these courses offering any chance to move up the social scale? As we have seen with Noemí —and as the study of García-Cano shows— when lacking a NIE these women are unable to access other formative courses that the rest of population do, in spite of, as various studies show (García-Cano 2000; Martínez Veiga 2000), these women having studied in their own countries. It is interesting to note here that this also was the case of many of my informants: they also had studied different professions in their home countries, but all of them were working in the domestic sector. The process to validate their studies is complex and takes time and money. Yet, as María García-Cano shows a high proportion of the workers of these organisations believe that 'immigrant women' have low levels of education or that their previous knowledge in their home countries is not adequate for the academic demands of having the same degree in Spain. Thus, they see that the only chance for immigrant women to participate in the labour market is through the domestic sector, including those whose visa was not expedited for that labour sector (2000:288). This is showing a clear inferiorisation of these women whose ways to access other sectors are more limited.

In this sense, Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal represent a break with these ideas. Moreover, through this radio they have got to publicise some of their concerns, feelings and include their subjectivities in the different workshops inside the organisation. Yet overall, the existence of the free-space that Hermanas Mirabal ceded for women from the 'outside' to develop their own activities is extremely important. With this objective, Elizabeth —a Hispano-Mexican artist— requested to use this free-space. Elizabeth had initiated a project with various Latin American women in another feminist organisation, 'Mujeres Progresistas', but moved to Hermanas Mirabal since she could use



their free-space on Thursdays. Mari, Delia and Rosa were the three women who worked with her, all of them Peruvian of Quechua background. The work of Elizabeth, Mari, Delia and Rosa belonged to a project funded in Mexico that exposed the transnational perspective of Indigenous women in Cocuxo-Mexico and Latin Americans in Spain and other parts. When initiating the work in Madrid Elizabeth found the same situation as in Las Radiantes: all women she worked with were working on domestic care which made it difficult to arrange interviews, meetings and finalise the project with all its members. Mari, Rosa and Delia were the three remaining women. The project consisted of meetings every second Thursday, creating an atmosphere which enabled them to expose their feelings and project their subjectivities into a creation:

Elizabeth: The majority of women I have met here, they didn't come here with the objective to work on domestic care; in houses, right? Only a very few of them. They do it because they can't work in their professions. I have met a lawyer, a mathematic teacher, a geologist... Those who came with a degree, they find the problem is that they have to ratify their certificates. And that costs a lot of money and time, because the process takes two years. So they need to get a life; and there are not many options. If you are young you might work as waitress, but there are not many more options than working in a house, with elders,.. I.e. to clean shit. So it's very frustrating.

So the majority of women I have worked with, they work as internal servants and they only have a day-off. And I don't want to take all their free time of that day. It is infamous. That's why we meet every two weeks. And it has been difficult. We didn't have a space at their times,.. Uff,.. But we got the result. We're going to make a mural on canvas and embroider their silhouettes to their knees. And from the knees to the bottom we'll put a picture of their feet. They are the invisible women, right? So, their bodies are invisible, but their feet move.

This workshop involved a shift for these women, who also had been enrolled in other courses in other organisations, as Mari explains:

I have done many courses in other places before. Because sometimes you want to take out from your mind all you have inside. But you have to be careful with the places you go, because in some places they just offer you courses to learn to cook Spanish food and things like that. I've enrolled in some courses a bit more,..., about carpentry for example. So, you go there, you take the course and they give you a diploma. I take all those diplomas with me, because who knows, maybe someday they'll be useful for something (laughs). But many of the courses for 'immigrant' women are about learning to iron, to turn on the washing machine and things like that! I have seen it with my eyes! When I see those things I feel like: 'We are useful only to cook and clean!'. Those courses I went were at 6 a.m. And it's because when you are working as internal you can't attend to the classes at another time.

You feel like you can't move out from the house. You have to be at home all day, looking after the necessities of other people. And at some point you forget about yourself, because you're just thinking of others. But you need more time for yourself. Not only Thursdays. I'm working

for a long time with the same family and they have recently given me another extra day: Sundays. But it's not enough, because the rest of the days you're just thinking and working for them all the time. There's not a time to start to work or to finish. You're in the house all the time, so you're working always.

I started to go to the 'Mujeres Progresistas Federación', because one of my cousins who lives here used to go there to see the lawyer of that place. So she told me to go there to solve something I didn't understand with the paperwork. My cousin was the first one who came to Spain and she helped us to come later. So my other cousin, Rosa also started to go and told me to go with her. Then she told me about the workshop with Elizabeth. We had a meeting with Elizabeth and she proposed us to do the workshop. At the beginning I thought it would be just a day, like now with you, an interview. But then she said it'd be continued. And at the beginning I wasn't sure, because when you get out from the house you want to be outside. Specially when the good weather comes. But then she said that it would be every two weeks. So I accepted it. And we have done it. We have been meeting to talk about how we feel. And then we did that thing with our silhouettes on the canvas.

The canvas, apart from getting visibility and talking about how we feel after having been immigrated, how we feel being here, it is also a way of leaving a kind of memory or something like that, that it can be seen that we have been here.

The work of these women included the canvas and a series of pictures that Mari, Rosa and Delia showed from their lives in Peru. It was promoted in the radio through an interview they requested and also in a presentation before an audience that was also recorded for the radio. Afterward, it was left on the walls of the organisation of Hermanas Mirabal for a time. After its time expired, Elizabeth took it with her to Mexico. Yet before that, the long-awaited visit from a representative of the council to Hermanas Mirabal occurred and this person, on her visit, showed interest in the exhibition, which made Elizabeth, Mari, Delia and Rosa very happy. And although this interest did not extend further, at least someone with an important position had seen their work. So it is most relevant here to identify these creative forms as forms of resistance, the expression of resistance through the projection of their subjectivities into a canvas, that was also extended through the waves of the radio and its exhibition in wherever Elizabeth takes it. Furthermore, this shows that, contrary to the courses through which people like Mari and Noemí are directed towards a very limited sector of the labor market, they found room to articulate and organise their resistance to make their voices heard.

Another case showing the ability of these women to move among different organisations to find ways to present resistance is Flor, a Mayan woman from Guatemala whom I met in Hermanas Mirabal. She approached Hermanas Mirabal and other organisations in search of emotional and legal support. From the first time we met, then and every time we meet, she likes to show me pictures of herself when she was in Guatemala, wearing her Mayan 'traditional' dresses and while she was working in an organisation in one of the areas with a high percentage of Indigenous population. I believe she likes to

show me these pictures not only because of the Mayan identity she professes, but also because she wants to 'prove' she is a respected person in Guatemala in her work advising young women about sexuality, women rights and sexist violence. She came to live to Madrid in 2012 due to her sister being seriously ill and thought that from Spain she could send money for her medicines. Through her brother and sister who already were in Madrid she initiated the migration and found a job as internal worker with a family where she had similar experiences to those described before; and later as outside-house domestic carer which only gave her a few hours of work. So, she went back to internal servant. Trying to get support, assistance and to report her situation, she got involved with different organisations such as Hermanas Mirabal:

I went to *locutorios* and looked for organisations of women in Madrid. I lied to my siblings. I told them that I was looking for jobs. But the thing is it was because I wasn't feeling good, because of my job and my sister. So I found an organisation that gave me psychologist assistance. And the psychologist told me that I would feel better if I go to a feminist organisation: Mujeres Progresistas because I had many things in common with them. In Guatemala there are other kinds of rights. And I wanted to know which are the rights here! I thought: 'If I had worked a lot for women rights in my country, why am I going to allow them to violate my rights in another country?' My siblings told me: 'You came here to work, not to do these things.' But I told my bosses which were my rights, and they didn't accept my conditions.

The problem is when one hesitates and is not secure, they take advantage. Sometimes one wonders how they look at you. The computer in the house got broken a couple of times. And I fixed the problem. And they looked at me and asked: 'How is possible that you know to do this?' What do they think I am? Stupid? When I arrived to Mirabal, my self-esteem was so down,... I felt like,.. Because in Guatemala I never worked on this. I always worked in offices, organising activities, projects,...

Sometimes we don't know our rights as immigrants,.. But to change things you have to know about your rights and be confident. That's why I looked for organisations and redacted a document for immigrant women. What I wrote on that document is about self-esteem, to prevent situations that I have experienced. Some professors from the university I was enrolled in Guatemala sent me a document about international rights. And also I got a lot of support from the 'Mujeres Progresistas'. So I wrote that document.

Now that I'm not working I can meet more people who are helping me. Because if I were in a house all the time I couldn't! I was working everyday! But now I can meet with other Latin American women who are domestic servants in parks, to make them aware. In our meetings, I ask them about any issue and they start to unburden. Then I tell them: do this, do that,.. To me it's very important to make aware to the employees and the employers, but it's a hard and long work. If you treat well to your employee, she will perform well. A girl told me that she was living in the cellar of the house, where the dryer was. I told her that she had to demand a room

where she can rest properly. Those are the things that I put in the document. We have the right to enjoy at least one hour for lunch. Maybe these things don't look important, but there are women who can't even have breakfast. So when you are negotiating your job conditions, you have to talk about these things. So that, if they don't give it to you, you can tell them: 'Look, we agreed on that'. Sometimes, we immigrant women don't know about these things when we are starting.

Unlike the other women, Flor managed to have found support in diverse organisations to write the document which can be useful for other women and offer support. While she did not continue participating in any of the groups of Hermanas Mirabal, she sporadically went to talk with some members of the radio and other groups. And from all these meetings there and in other places she collected information that was useful for her to redact the document. This constitutes an instance of why it should not be generalised that all the organisations are following policies that continue with the structure of power. Yet we should not ignore that a series of measures that some of them take, by ignoring feelings and subjectivities and through formative actions that typecast them, are more likely to contribute to the feminisation, coloniality and racialisation of labour than to break with them. It is necessary to analyse more deeply how many of these actions are influenced by institutions who determine who can access specific services; for instance, when lacking a NIE. As I found out through a worker in one of these organisations, the institutional funding was what established for them that all the people who got into their organisation had such a NIE. Nonetheless, it is very important the strategies that women such as María Magdalena, Noemí, Flor, Mari, Delia and Rosa find to overcome obstacles and present resistance to the ways that their feelings and bodies are inferiorised through the structures of power; actions that join those of the women who stayed anonymous. In this sense, via the short-film of 'Exit' and the exhibition of the work of Elizabeth, Mari, Rosa and Delia which also was recorded in the radio, those women have become powerful since they have reached a wider audience outside the organisations.

#### 4. Incorporating Indigeneity into the resistance

In the analysis of these forms of resistance there should be room to explore the differentiation that is produced when the 'bodies' of these women are read in a racial and ethnic way. All the women who participated in these projects and worked in the domestic sector had Indigenous backgrounds. Some of them identified as such, such as Delia (Quechua), Noemí (Kichwa) and Flor (Maya); while others did not show such identification so openly. Yet their physical characteristics made visible their indigenous ancestry. I am not trying to say that those Latin American women who present other physical characteristics are exempt from experiencing the effects of the coloniality of labour. On the contrary, as the work of Encarnación Gutiérrez shows, the residues of colonialism act in the work market in

intersection with ethnicity and nationality, regardless of the darkness of their skin colour. If we remember, from the times of the colonies, physical characteristics were not reliable markers to distinguish between ‘Mestizos’ and ‘Spanish’ due to the high miscegenation; though there were other juridical markers which acted to differentiate. Nowadays, other juridical and cultural markers, such as their nationality and accents act as differentiators. However, we should not disregard the ‘body’ as a strong marker that acts to accentuate the Indigenous and African differentiations inside the ‘Latino’. On various occasions I have mentioned that as Avtar Brah signaled, the articulation of identities responds to subjectivities and a shared experience by a group, whose members have been drawn through the construction of difference. These women who approach Las Radiantes and other organisations are searching for a group identity based on a shared experience under the contingent sign of ‘gender’ and join other Spanish and Latin American women they meet there. Yet the racist difference that operates against Latin American women, and even operates differently within Latin Americans, situates Indigenous and African descendants in a different position. As Avtar Brah points out, power relations that operate over bodies are hierarchically configured, not just as “dominant” vs. “subordinated”, but also at points inside those categories. Brah designates these power operations as ‘forms of differential racialisation’ (Brah 2011:26). Thus, she proposes to pay attention to how groups which have been differently racialised are also differently positioned in respect to each other. In this sense, the creative forms of resistance and the feelings of these women are again key to see how the difference based on Indigeneity operates here.

The ways in which these women had to claim room for Indigenous resistance inside Las Radiantes were diverse. Music became a useful instrument to claim it. Since I was the person in charge of editing the programs, I was also the person who added the music to the recordings. It was agreed that the music would be selected by those people who participated in the programs. Carmen had proposed to do a program about the different countries of the women who participated in the radio. So that, a person from the group who were from that country gave me the music she selected as the representative of her country. This is how Cecilia, Elizabeth, Mari, Rosa, Delia and other women did it. What they gave me were songs which had become a symbol of Indigeneity in their countries, such as ‘El cóndor pasa’, a song that refers to the Inca civilisation.

As well, some of these women tried to direct the subjects of the programs towards ‘Indigeneity’. When a program about ‘Paraguay’ was made, Cecilia insisted on focusing the view towards Guaraní women in Paraguay: ‘Their situation is different to other Paraguayan women’, she said. Meanwhile, María Magdalena drew attention to the Indigenous Latin American voices in Spain. Specifically, she pointed at an Ecuadorian organisation CONADEE — the National Coordination of Ecuadorians in Spain— and one of its members, Aida Quintanoa. Aida Quintanoa is an Indigenous activist and domestic worker who was one of the first persons to stand against the evictions by banks of Ecuadorians, other Latin Americans and Spanish of their houses in Madrid. This woman actively participated in the PAH —Affected by Mortgage Platform— to restore the housing law and offer compensation to those

affected. María Magdalena insisted on talking about this woman in Las Radiantes, who ‘happened’ to be a cleaner, woman, Indigenous, migrant and activist.<sup>20</sup>

Liliana Suárez Navaz (Suárez 2007, 2010) defines the importance of including a comparative exploration into the different forms of socio-cultural and political participation of migrants regarding their context of departure and destination. She exemplifies it with the case of a group of Kichwa peoples from Ecuador who meet in the public space in Madrid and have a process of redefinition of their identity from ‘Andean Indigenous people’ to ‘Latin American immigrant’ (Suárez 2012:50). She employs a transnational perspective to affirm that the ‘contemporary Indigenous identities acquire new relevance in the globalised world’ (2012:48) through, for instance, the creation of associative culture. The appropriation of spaces, in this case study, a radio space, constitutes a strategy that makes references to their original countries while establishing networks in the country of reception. So it is interesting to see in the case of the women of Las Radiantes how they try to include Indigenous identities in this process of creating networks in the country of reception, though a group that it has not even been defined under the contingent sign of ‘Latina’ but through the ‘gender’ one.

Accordingly, it is necessary to see the notions of difference in the discourses of ‘race’ and ‘nation’ and talk about ‘ethnic identities’. Indeed, claiming room in Las Radiantes for voices from Indigeneity is responding to, on one hand, a transnational connection, on the other hand, to the ways that these women experience their differentiated position in Spain, in which their Indigeneity is re-designed. Let’s see the latter from the analysis of feelings of Mari and Noemí in relation to their jobs:

Mari: This is the kind of job we can do, d’you know? We cannot opt to other things,.. Domestic service. That’s it. But it’s the same whatever I go. The other day I was with a Latina friend having a coffee and she is light skinned. And I told her: ‘you will see that when the waiter comes with the receipt, he’ll give it to you’. And that’s how it happened. That’s how it happens always. It seems that we’re here only to clean, that’s it. It’s like we cannot do anything else.

Noemí: I always say that I’m Black. When I was a girl, and I was at school with the nuns, you could see that the girls who had white skin, who were blonde, had privileges. I always felt very discriminated there. And I have never felt anything like that here in Spain. On the contrary. Here, I have felt very valued. Some people have told me things like ‘how beautiful is your skin colour’. But I have felt that discrimination while working, d’you know? Some Spanish women are racist. When you are working for them... you can feel that they see your skin colour differently.

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<sup>20</sup> For information about Aida Quintanoa see the work of Ruiz Trejo (2015); Tello Pérez (n/d) and The Guardian (2011).

As García Cano explains, to understand the inequalities that are produced with the different 'immigrant' communities in the labour market it is necessary to examine the differences that are created by other dualisms such as 'Black/White', in addition to their nationalities, social class and gender differences (2000: 280). It is difficult to measure how this differentiation acts in daily practices. Some media reflects the racialisation of the figure of the 'Indio/Latino' for example in its mediated portrait of the 'Machu Picchu' and other media report it.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, all of my informants, in both Hermanas Mirabal and Entrecalles, argued they have experienced or witnessed a different treatment when Latin Americans present physical characteristic according to the idea of 'Indio/Latino'. Our analysis of the feelings, interacting, as we can see in Noemí words, in a transnational manner, can help to disclose some of these differentiations within the 'Indio/Latino' construction. From their feelings and their creative ways to resist we can see the relations of power. In this sense, the majority of shared feelings in the women of this research concerns the inferiorisation from their bosses (for instance Flor wondered: What do they think I am? Stupid?) and their pigeonholing in the domestic sector (for instance, Mari said: We're here only to clean). All these feelings are telling us about experiences and subjectivities that respond to the gendered division of roles in the society but as well to the forms of differential racialisations inside postcoloniality in Madrid.

These women have found in Las Radiantes room to, in greater or lesser extent, incorporate diverse identities, subjectivities and to talk about these experiences in different ways attempting to articulate them inside the feminist identity. This is specially significant considering the high invisibility of these women on media, their defenselessness and lack of legal support and the at times inattention from some organisations. Las Radiantes, instead, has been one of the spaces where they have found some visibility. Nonetheless, for the last part of this chapter we will see the boundaries on the articulation of diverse subjectivities into the feminist political identity.

## 5. What does it mean to be a feminist?

In order to establish a sisterhood between women of diverse skin colours, nationalities, ethnicities, sexuality and classes, the tendency in Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal is often to advocate toward critical feminist perspectives and methodologies such as the Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagarde's of *sororidad*. However, findings in this research show that while their objective is to erase ethnocentric assumptions and articulate differences, to put it into practice needs continued dialogues that enable a break with rigid categories of what it means to be *feminist*. It is hard to realise that in the juncture between 'being feminist' and 'expressing feminism' are specific cultural and social constructions, yet I will provide some ethnographic data that indicates there are still residues of

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<sup>21</sup> See the news: Adital (2010) ['We are tired of Indios-Latinos': The hidden reality of the Latin American immigration to Spain]; El Público (2013, March 19) [The hotel in Madrid which humiliates its Indigenous guests].

colonial, universalist and hegemonic thinking on this construction. My argument is that the ‘different forms of being feminist’ correspond to the different forms of presenting resistance through the radio and other mediums that we have been seeing in this chapter, and that these resistances respond to different experiences and subjectivities marked by their diverse racial, gender, labour and class positions in the society.

I will start by a discussion of ‘expressing a feminist language’. During the production and recording of programs in the radio Carmen insisted that the radio members emphasise the use of a ‘feminist language’. In Spain there is a growing tendency for feminist voices to criticise sexism in the use of the Spanish language. Since in Spanish language there exist two genders (female and male), until recently the tendency in the use of the language has been to maintain a series of linguistic norms that express sexism in the language. For instance, the general tendency has been based on grammatical norms that foster the use of the male gender in plural to refer to both men and women together; to omit the female gender when talking about professions ‘seen’ as masculine (for instance, doctor); and to use the female for professions ‘seen’ for women (for instance, cleaner). Marcela Lagarde, on her approach to *sororidad*, suggests breaking with these linguistic expressions of sexism: ‘I think we could change the *o* [masculine] by *a* [female] to face the sexism on language’ (n/d, 135). Thus, for years, feminist voices in the Spanish speaking countries have claimed a shift that is gradually occurring at different levels of Spanish society, such as in education (where teachers are encouraged to refer to their students as ‘vosotras’ (*you* in female, plural) instead of ‘vosotros’ (*you* in masculine, plural)). This gradual change is becoming a great success for feminist voices, academics and feminist organisations such as Hermanas Mirabal that keep working on extending and ‘normalising’ it between speakers. While strategies to normalise this use —such as by fostering its reproduction through radio programs—might seem ‘logical’ for a feminist organisation, this was followed by continued corrections of both Spanish and Latin American women, which came to foster a symbolic dualism based on ‘bad/good feminist expressions’. Yet there was another difference between these women, which is that some of the Latin American women made a use of the masculine not only in plural but also at times to refer to themselves in singular, which ‘goes against’ the linguistic practices that are fostered by feminist voices. A discussion around this linguistic debate occurred when a Dominican woman of Tetuán went to Hermanas Mirabal to give them a copy of the book she had written about Dominican Republic and wanted the space to promote it through a launch. After much thought and doubts based on the chance to have another Dominican woman from Tetuán involved in the centre, Carmen decided to reject that book because it lacked a ‘feminist language or thought and it was based just on the stories of men’. A few weeks later this book came to my mind when I was recording a talk for the radio with an Italian postcolonial feminist theorist who was analysing literature written by women. She commented that most contemporary Latin American women’s literature had more feminist character than those of Spanish, which provoked annoyance in some Spanish women in the room.



Both this sort of literary comparative comment and the linguistic corrections, it seems to me, highlight the differences between groups and individuals instead of merging the differences into the feminist identity. In other words, they result in limited ‘forms to be or express feminism’ that can have a differentiated effect or even be hierarchical. Furthermore, findings of this research show that the reality of these women who are ethnically and/or class marked are much more complex than the ‘correct use of language’; and that to stress “linguistic errors” can differentiate more than connect. I will return here to the study of Lila Abu-Lughod about Bedouin women who states that it is possible to maintain or reproduce forms of domination while presenting resistance:

[...] how might we develop theories that give these women credit for resisting in a variety of creative ways the power of those who control so much of their lives, without either misattributing to them forms of consciousness of feminist politics — or devaluing their practices as prepolitical, primitive or even misguided? [...] how might we account for the fact that Bedouin women both resist and support the existing system of power (they support it through practices like veiling, for example), without resorting to analytical concepts like false consciousness, which dismisses their own understanding of their situation, or impression management, which make of them cynical manipulators?

[...] the power relations take many forms, have many aspects and interweave. And by presupposing some sort of hierarchy of significant and insignificant form of power, we might be blocking ourselves from exploring the ways in which these forms might actually be working simultaneously, in concert or at cross-purposes (Abu-Lughod 1990: 47-48).

What the approach of Abu-Lughod is showing are the different forms that resistance can take, regardless of other practices that are considered as supportive of forms of power, such as the continuing of a sexist language. Furthermore, her view questions whether rigid cultural and social analytical constructions which determine what is — and what is *not*— feminism further gendered equality and whether ‘corrective’ attitudes entail a sort of paternalism—in a maternalistic form—and symbolic hierarchy. There are other critical feminist theorists who have been arguing about the ways in which diverse subjectivities are incorporated into feminist agendas. Judith Butler argues that ‘feminist theory has assumed that there is some existing identity, understood through the category of women, which not only initiates feminist interests [...] but constitutes the subject for whom political representation is pursued’ (Butler 2001:341). She explains that feminist theory has fostered the development of a language that fully or adequately represents women, yet that the very subject of women should no longer be understood in abiding terms. The axis of this problematic is that the domains of political and linguistic representations set out in advance the criteria by which subjects are formed, which are produced through certain exclusionary practices (2001:342). What critical feminisms are coming to argue is that the category of women, the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by those very structures of power and that it should not be assumed that the term *women* denotes a common identity, ‘because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities’ (2011:434). As result, it becomes impossible to separate out ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. Hence, we could argue that the term *feminist* cannot denote a common identity but an

articulation of diverse subjectivities and identities. Instead, we should talk about different ways ‘of being feminist’ that can be articulated for a limited time by diverse subjectivities and expressed in diverse creative forms to present resistance to the ways that gender is intersected with other forms of power. Thus, one can also stop to consider whether it is pressing —on a scale of priorities— for instance ‘to talk in female’ when one is first trying to get a voice that is usually so hidden by not only gender power yet also the racist and postcolonial powers.

This critical perspective is signaling a political assumption that falls into a universalist and hegemonic category which has been also discussed by decolonial critical feminists. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2004) and María Lugones (2008) have been working around the discussions that emerged in the meetings of the ‘Women of Color Institute for Radical Research and Action’ which gathered voices from Afro descendent women from the U.S. and other women racially marked living in the country. Lugones claims that gendered and racial intersections are what have defined ‘woman’ from a dominant historical perspective based on imperialist understanding and a still existing coloniality between diverse women (Lugones 2008: 82). As well, Alexander and Mohanty give centrality to the way in which feminism has been naturalised across history based on the experiences of Westernised urban and middle class women. In addition, they have signaled crossing subjects in relation to the dominant heterosexuality in the programs of feminist studies. Following a similar critical perspective, bell hooks (2004) has explained how in hegemonic feminisms it is rarely questioned whether their point of view reflect prejudices of race and class, whether they pay attention to the racial hierarchies. Because as she states the structure of classes is formed from the racial politics in capitalist society. As we have seen in this chapter, this is reflected in the racialisation and coloniality of labour.

In recent times, some voices are signaling a shift in the most contemporary forms of feminism when incorporating these differences. Specifically Amina Mama<sup>22</sup> signals that although there is still a relative power of definition by White —hegemonic— feminists, more and more Westernised feminists are listening to other feminists, reconsidering their first paradigms and providing more complex theorists, as an effect of the influence of African, Latin American and Asian feminisms into postcolonial feminisms (Mama 2013:14). So, one of the main concerns that exists now seems to be about how to put horizontal sisterhood into practice in daily encounters between women from diverse regions, nationalities, sexualities,<sup>23</sup> ethnicities, urban or rural contexts, etc. María Lugones suggests that to incorporate differences and subjectivities into feminist unity there should be a shift in the imperialisms and the coloniality that ‘govern’ these relationships. The definition that María Lugones

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<sup>22</sup> See also bell hooks (2013) in an interview where she proposes to look at forms to construct alliances with ‘White revolutionary feminists’ who are less heard because ‘they aren’t serving the bourgeois agenda of the status quo’.

<sup>23</sup> See an interesting anthropological research about discussions on transgender, sexuality and de-victimisation of sexual workers in Mejía, Norma (2006), which is also fostering a shift on the victimised ways in which sexual workers are seen.

offers for the term ‘women of colour’ is clarifying on this sense. She explains that ‘women of colour’ is a horizontal movement of solidarity by diverse women in the U.S. which does not point to an identity which is split, but rather as Lugones states, an organic coalition between Indigenous, Mestizas, Mulattas, Black,.. women and others who are victims of the ‘coloniality of gender’.

Another instances can demonstrate how Westernised assumptions and the legacy of the colonial and different subjectivities manifests in daily practice. Carmen proposed to organise a special program on the radio for the ‘8th of March Day’. Then M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena and Cecilia asked Carmen and me: ‘Is the 8th of March Women’s Day in Spain?’. This internationalised day of the women is the one chosen in Spain to represent the struggles for gender equality, and as such, it is the chosen day by Hermanas Mirabal to celebrate *sisterhood*. However, both M<sup>a</sup> Magdalena and Cecilia ignored this celebration: ‘In Paraguay we have the day of the Paraguayan woman on the 24th of February. That’s our Women’s day’, Cecilia said. The ‘*Kuña Paraguáy Ára*’ in Guaraní, recalls the celebration of the so called ‘First Assembly of American Women’ in Asuncion, where women from diverse social classes and parts of the country met to find ways to support Paraguay in the ‘Triple Alliance War’ against Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina with British intervention. In Spain instead, the Women’s Day is the 8th of March, following the invitation of the United Nations for all countries to adopt this date to commemorate the struggle of women. This event has been selected from a Westernised point of view as the representative of ‘all women’, yet as we have seen is not recognised as such by both Cecilia and María Magdalena. That these women disowned the “internationalised” Day of Women should not be recognised, as Abu-Lughod said, as ‘pre-political, primitive or even mis-guided practice’. It reveals about two different contexts in which Westernised feminist symbols that attempt to be internationalised receive diverse acceptance. Otherwise, this could be interpreted as a division between ‘providential’ women educated in a Westernised feminist context and those who have not yet have the chance to ‘become’ feminists by following ‘advanced, Westernised, internationalised’ symbols and behaviour.

An instance that tells us about a remnant coloniality in daily social relations is that which is built through stereotypes that circulate around Latin American women, presenting them as victims of abusive partners. Diverse institutional voices and media have been reporting and highlighting cases of domestic violence in which victims and abusers were of Latin American or African background. Frequently, when violence is executed by or against them, their backgrounds are detailed in the news and reports. This leads to generalisations and stereotypisations as the following example shows. When Mari, Rosa, Delia and Elizabeth were presenting their project before the audience in Hermanas Mirabal, a man who was assisting and who was working on a exhibition about domestic violence in another organisation, asked them:

I think your job it’s amazing. Have you ever thought about presenting it in another place? I’m running an exhibition about domestic violence very close to here. So you could come, present it there and talk about your experiences.

Mari: I have never been a victim of domestic violence!

After this small conversation there was silence in the room. No part of their exposition talked at all about domestic violence, or even mentioned relationships. Rather, it was focused on the work they had done as a result of exteriorising their feelings; about linguistic barriers between the varieties of Spanish in America and Spain; and about how phenotypes determine the acceptance and pigeonholing of Andean women in the labour sectors. The recompilation study about subalternities and postcoloniality of Mezzadra, Spivak, Mohanty et al. (2008) makes clear that ‘inappropriate’, ‘subaltern’ subjects are loaded with a series of images that not only stereotype and pigeonhole them as sensual, oppressed, yet also present the Westernised discourses as liberators of backward cultures. Findings in this research show that these discourses look away from institutional liabilities towards social services, and that feminist discourses are utilised in these contexts to support argumentations of superiority and inferiority. Nirmal Puwar (2008), one of the authors of the above mentioned compilation explains that these kinds of stereotyped representations and the ‘politics of salvation’ present different faces depending on the contextualisation of the specific space and time where it happens. As Puwar states, it is ironic to see how feminist discourses that have been not embraced before, are utilized against the culture of ‘Others’ or the men of ‘Other cultures’ to extol Westernised societies. This logic sustains ideas of salvation towards other women, considered likely to be victims of domestic violence for instance, while ignoring other forms of abuse and institutional vulnerability. As Puwar indicates, this is also in part due to the ways that ‘Westernised women’ have appeared as illustrated agents that liberate ‘the women of the colony’. Exclusions of the ‘political body’ that historically represented ‘the sexual contract’ is weakened by a gendered ‘racial contract’, in which body, nationality and ethnicity/“race” become visual indicators. As I have tried to show, visual indicators operate in the media and cultural industries in Spain through narratives that make visible and extol nationalised bodies while ‘other’ bodies remain in the shadow or are brought to the light in contexts of victimisation, criminalisation and alike.

Experiences of Latin Americans from the radio suggest that the emphasis on a directed feminism which neglects ethnic and class differences appears in other feminist organisations in Madrid. As a matter of fact, Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal were considered by the majority of my informants more inclusive than other organisations they passed by. Specifically, Elizabeth, reported having experienced a paternalistic and at times, inferior treatment in other spaces:

There are many Spanish with goodwill, who work with immigrants; i.e. they are really interested, right? But we have to see which are their focus. For example, in the Progressive Women’s Federation, they basically work with immigrants. But most of the staff are Spanish. So, they have a different perspective of the realities of the women. And they talk about integration,.. What is integration?!

I got involved with them because there was an Argentinean woman working there. And she used to say that in fact Spanish women are the ones who should take the integration courses,

because they need to see other realities. [...] There's a total incomprehension about the cultures of others. Not only Latinas, but everyone. This society is based on two things: old colonialism and that many Spanish have never travelled. So what they know about other cultures is through the TV, which is a very limited vision.

The staff from Mirabal,.. they are very, very cool. I adore them, because they are much more open. They travel, they go to Ecuador. So, you can see that there are different levels of interests on these organisations. I always say that there are many types of Spain-s [Spanish].

As Elizabeth suggested, it cannot be generalised that all the organisations, their members and staff advocate ignoring class, ethnic and historical injustices for some women. Rather, this is more the result of a colonial legacy that has been historically and institutionally so embedded in the society, that it permeates as 'naturalised' to some individuals. Furthermore, we saw before that some Latin American women had felt inattention by some organisations that were formed by both Latin American and Spanish workers. Yet the words of Elizabeth here are claiming the need for a greater mutual understanding and to foster a decolonisation of these relationships.

Another example that can tell us about this colonial and racial divide legacy—which occurs now with Moroccan women— happened one day when members of other community radios, Sonia and Rosa, were assisting at Las Radiantes. Carmen proposed an idea for a new program and asked us our opinions:

Carmen: I was thinking about telling Amina to do a program about Arab women; half program in Spanish and the other in Arab. What do you think? Do you think they would listen to it?

Rosa: Some of those women are very Westernised, so they would. But others,... I don't know. I wonder if they have ever listened to a radio.

Ángeles: Maybe they never listened to the radio before because nobody talk about them.

Sonia: And with them!!

Rosa's answer discouraged Carmen about her idea, until we replied. She kept thinking for a while, then considered again that her idea could be good:

Carmen: Yes... About them and with them... Yes! Because also it'd be in Arab too.

All these instances make us realise that the relations of mutual sisterhood need continued debates and exposition of diverse opinions, subjectivities and feelings in daily practice to overcome this coloniality. Chandra Talpade Mohanty suggests a method — 'relations of mutuality'— that is useful in this sense because it goes further in considering historical racial, gendered and class categories, and draws on forms of mutual solidarity through the sharing of individual experiences (Mohanty 2008). As an example that proves it is necessary to include diverse experiences and subjectivities to create the relation of mutuality, we can talk about the fact that Latin American women were understood by other users of the feminist organisation in Hermanas Mirabal as 'less agile' with the internet and other

technological sources as symptom of the ‘impoverishment’ on their countries, their education. After interviewing the women in the radio, I found out that the majority did not have access to the internet, due to the isolation of their domestic jobs. These women had to go to *locutorios* on their scarce free time if they wanted to contact with their relatives in America, chat on internet or check their emails. Information about all the activities at the centre were distributed by email, and the staff called by phone those who did not have that access. However, due to work limitations, callings were not regular. These were also obstacles that made the participation of Latin American women in Las Radiantes intermittent and explained the lack of familiarity in some of them with the internet and other technological tools. So that, we can see that the real cause of their structural, economic position is racialised, whereas an attributed Third-Worldness is thought to be the cause. Nonetheless, as other projects in Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal such as ‘Exit’ are showing, to offer the chance for ‘other ethnic groups’ to ‘appropriate the radio’, to provide them with resources and to allow them to express their feelings, reinforces the conviviality, it guarantees the expression of ‘other’ voices and helps to overcome differences.

As this research shows, we should question what we mean when we say ‘feminist’. Encarnación Gutiérrez states that when saying “woman” we can mean different things depending on the geopolitical and historical framework (2010:27). In the same manner when saying “feminist” we can mean different things that ‘cannot be enclosed in a monolingual framework claiming universal truth’ (ibid.). And the multicultural picture of Madrid and encounters in social spheres claim an urgent pluri-linguality. Going back to Mohanty, we have the idea of a ‘relation of mutualities’ which seems pertinent for this case study. Mohanty poses this concept in order to bring together into feminism women of ‘all colours’ —including white— as a way to look for mutual understanding and horizontal sisterhood. Despite the ‘goodwill of the different Spain-s’, it is absolutely necessary that research informs about ‘colonial symbolic constructions’ that operate in our societies —including feminisms—, that at times are ‘naturalised’ on us. Yet the work of organisations like Hermanas Mirabal and Las Radiantes —their successes and their failures— which permit women from different ethnic groups to work together are necessary if we are to foster dialogues and a wide vis-à-vis sisterhood. I believe that Las Radiantes and Hermanas Mirabal are assuming a challenge that not everyone is willing to assume: providing room for women like those in this thesis to express their voices. The way towards *sisterhood* between diverse women is a way that must be constructed on a daily basis and with continued negotiations. In this sense, the radio is an extraordinary element to facilitate that visualisation. And let’s remember, Las Radiantes has been one of the very few spaces where these women have found a space from which to project their voices. Definitely, they are struggling to foster a social change which decolonises their bodies and breaks with the postcolonial, gendered and racial character of the capitalist division of labour, by adopting alliances with other collectives, participating in the articulation of political identity, utilising organisations resources and using the radio as a way to render visible the ‘invisible women’.

## Part II: In Sydney



Mural in front of Koori Radio station, in Redfern, Sydney

I finished the fieldwork in Madrid in October 2013. In late November 2013 I moved to Sydney. A week later, I was living in Redfern, situated inside the Gadigal land of the Aboriginal Eora nation. Redfern was the main area of Sydney where my fieldwork took place and I stayed there until my last day in Sydney, in June 2015. This neighbourhood is considered a symbol of the Aboriginal community in Sydney, where past and present artistic, media, political and other Aboriginal organisations have raised their projects. The two organisations I worked with during the fieldwork in Sydney, the radio station Koori Radio and the theatre group Moogahlin Performing Arts, have been located and/or involved in this area, participating in the artistic, mediated, political movement. My first contact with Koori Radio was at an annual festival they organise —Yabun Festival— in January 2014, for which I volunteered. I started the fieldwork with Koori Radio when I achieved Ethics approval in May 2014. I did a shorter time fieldwork with Moogahlin Performing Arts, since this group was inactive for a while and some of its members were not in Sydney. So much of the research in Sydney corresponds to the work done with Koori Radio where I also met some members of Moogahlin Performing Arts.

However, the time I spent with Moogahlin Performing Arts provided interesting data that are reflected in this thesis.

This fieldwork also took me to other parts of Sydney where Aboriginal people are concentrated, such as Parramatta, La Perouse and Blacktown. I also attended different events organised by other Aboriginal people in Redfern and surrounds, such as the rally commemorating the death of the Aboriginal youth TJ Hickey, which was organised with the support of the Aboriginal elder Ray Jackson. Some days after this rally, my supervisor at Macquarie University, Eve Vincent, and I went to the house of Ray Jackson so that I could receive an Aboriginal Passport as an incomer to the country. This passport acknowledges Australia as an Aboriginal land and pays respect to the land and its Indigenous peoples. Ray Jackson issued the passport for me in his house. Some months later I attended an Aboriginal Passport Ceremony organised by both Ray Jackson and his Latin American comrade Raul Bassi, in which Ray gave this passport to refugees and other incomers to Australia, symbolically welcoming us to the country.

Ray Jackson was also the person who introduced me to Koori Radio by providing the contact of one of its managers. He was a Wiradjuri activist who worked for the Aboriginal community in Redfern and further, a prominent activist for Aboriginal people's rights and for justice about Aboriginal deaths in custody. He founded the Indigenous Social Justice Association (ISJA). This association and he were awarded by the French government agency *Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme* for their contribution to human rights. He was a tireless person in the struggle for justice, willing to help people, amongst whom I was included. I thank Ray for opening the doors of his house for me and introducing me to Koori Radio. When I first thanked him for his help he smiled and answered: 'No worries, international solidarity'.

After this meeting in his house and the Aboriginal passport ceremony, I did not meet Ray again until he went to Koori Radio for a radio-interview to talk about various concerns of Aboriginal people in Sydney. From then we started to catch up for lunch-meetings at the restaurant he chose: the Spanish restaurant on the corner of Redfern Street. In those lunch-meetings Ray used to explain to me about the past and present political situation of Australia and tell me stories that helped me to comprehend the most recent history of Australia. I thank Ray for those meetings and the time he spent with me. I also thank him for the interest he showed in the political situation in Spain.

Sadly we could not catch up for our last lunch since he passed away a few days before. This thesis is also dedicated to his memory.



## **Chapter Six: *Welcome to Redfern*. Articulating Aboriginal resistance through media and culture**

### **1. ‘Welcome to Redfern’, a focus of political resistance**

I went to Koori Radio after Ray Jackson provided the contact of Heather, one of its managers. I had roughly explained to Ray what the research was about, yet I needed the approval from Koori Radio to start to work there. So Heather and I arranged a meeting to chat. When I arrived I was welcomed by Sarah, a Torres Strait Islander woman who worked in two of the radio shows. She took me to the main door where Heather and other Aboriginal Koori Radio workers were recording a video. I went to a small reception hall to wait for Heather to finish. There I met Joe, a Maori man who was having a relaxing break before his show started and with whom I had an introductory conversation. He had just arrived from his job as journalist at a big TV-radio channel and was volunteering in his free time at Koori Radio. This small reception hall is usually used for visitors and also for the radio staff to have their breaks. I have come to call it the ‘yarn-hall’ because of the many other conversations that later I would have there with other radio staff and the many other conversations I witnessed between them and visitors; using the term —yarn—employed by the radio staff and other Aboriginal people when they have moments of group chats. The sofa which was in this ‘yarn-hall’ was covered by a fabric with the Aboriginal flag colours and around, there were plenty of flyers of diverse artistic, media, political and other organisations from Redfern. When Heather finished the recording she invited me to go to a bigger room, the meeting room for the staff. She read my proposal of the research and accepted it. Then she explained to me the policies of the radio station from its foundation: firstly to give a voice for the community, acting as a counterpoint to stereotyped representations of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander peoples on mainstream media. Secondly to promote the cultural and other creations of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people due to their limited chances to work in the cultural and media industries.

Koori Radio has become an important device for promoting artistic Aboriginal forms and media voices in an attempt to decolonise the commodified representation in the mass media and the cultural industry which represents Aboriginal people. Yet it also has become the scenario where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have come together to join forces and built an articulated political identity. What Heather did not tell me on this occasion, yet that I later could see, is that the articulation of a political identity of resistance has also been re-articulated with the incorporation of people from other ethnic groups. The presence of the Maori man, Joe, in the ‘yarn-hall’ was an instance of this coming together of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander peoples with Maori, African, Fiji and other ethnic groups of people involved in the radio. As I will further explain, this involved continued re-articulations of the Aboriginal political identity built in Koori Radio with other groups under the racial and colonial contingent signs of ‘Black’ and ‘Indigenous’. These re-articulations respond to shared

experiences of these ethnic groups in relation to racial markers but also to dominant mass media and art production representations of them.

From this first day I kept meeting Aboriginal people from diverse nations in Australia, Torres Strait Islander and other peoples, who worked there or volunteered in the radio, and were coordinated by Heather and another two managers towards the radio described objectives. As I aim to show, these articulations and objectives are influenced by past political Aboriginal movements occurring in Australia, but more specifically in Redfern, from the late 1960s. Redfern is an Aboriginal neighbourhood that from that time has been an important focus for Aboriginal resistance through diverse cultural and political movements. In this chapter, I am introducing the significance of Redfern as a place of Aboriginality, explaining its past history of political and cultural activism until the present including a gentrification happening there. I am referring to political and cultural movements together because they are inseparable to the extent that the political movement has been claiming sovereignty and self-expression for Aboriginal peoples, while the artistic and media strands have been their vehicle for expressing it. This political expression has needed its own mediated spaces that facilitate the communities' expression, emerging in diverse Aboriginal media such as journals and radio, wherein Koori Radio has come to have an important role.

As I got to know more and more people in the radio, they made reference to this past in Redfern with enthusiasm due to the importance that Redfern has had for achieving Aboriginal rights. I will reproduce here part of a conversation I had with one of the Aboriginal radio presenters, nicknamed 'the Grandfather'—whom I will fully introduce in chapters eight and nine—and who had been working in the radio from almost its beginning and witnessed this political and artistic effervescence in Redfern:

Grandfather: The 'Redfern Band' —Black Lace<sup>24</sup>— was an absolutely brilliant band who played at The Empress Hotel; which is no longer a hotel,<sup>25</sup> but of course the building is still standing there. And during the 70s and 80s was a very predominant hotel for Aboriginal people. That's where they used to go to drink [...] Redfern's always being the meeting place!!

Ángeles: So Redfern started to be like a reference, like a meeting point?

Grandfather: Redfern was probably the last reminisce of Black-fellas of Sydney area until they started to coming from all over the places, started to coming from over the North, from Western New South Wales. People started to coming from all over the country to Sydney.

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<sup>24</sup> Black Lace was a country-rock local Aboriginal band whose original name was Silvia Linings. The Grandfather refers to it as the 'Redfern Band' due to its connection with this neighbourhood and its participation in events and political-artistic movement (see Walker 2014).

<sup>25</sup> A hotel was the name given in Australia to pubs in which it was allowed to serve alcohol and by regulation, had to also offer accommodation. Nowadays, many of these still called hotels do not provide such accommodation but the use of this name remains. The Empress Hotel was one of the few places in Sydney where Aboriginal people were allowed in and allowed to drink alcohol during that time. It became popular between Aboriginal people, as a place to socialise, find relatives and employment opportunities. It has also been described as a 'site of heavy-handed police action and the focus of arbitrary racial persecution' (see Gilchrist 2015).

Ángeles: Is it the time when there is a crisis in the rural world?

Grandfather: Yeah, yeah,.. For jobs, or even just to get to the city for more opportunities for their families. Even for political reasons as well!! To get involved with the people in here.

Obviously Redfern is a meeting place where people come to meet from all different nations.

As the Grandfather explains, Aboriginal people from different nations in New South Wales and even other parts of Australia arrived in Sydney willing to get involved in the political, musical and other cultural effervescence and to look for employment opportunities (see Norman 2014:14). Redfern has been connected to other parts of NSW and Australia since 1855 by the largest and busiest train station in Australia: Central Station, which originally was called Redfern Station (2014:11). Yet there is another element that explains why Aboriginal people went to Redfern: the opportunities that this area gave them to find their kin. This is the way that one of the members of the radio, Richard, took for finding his relatives after having been removed from his family, as he explained me:

Richard: I think I was two months old when my parents,...We came down here to Redfern,... And then,..., at eight months old I was forced out to non-Indigenous parents. And then, I was in the orphanage at Parramatta for two months. And then, when I was ten months old, these people came and picked me up.

Ángeles: So did you grow up with them?

Richard: I grew up with them until my foster mother died and then a year after I left ... About thirteen I run away from home. Yeah! I wanted to find my Aboriginal family again.

Ángeles: And did you find it?

Richard: Yeah! Down here!

Ángeles: How did you find it?

Richard: I just went to The Block in Redfern.

Ángeles: And you asked?

Richard: Yeah.

Ángeles: Is it that,... ?

[When I'm trying to say "easy" he affirms with emphasis while he is drinking his cup of coffee].

Richard: I just went there; asked around. People asked me,.. When you ask another Aboriginal,...When Aboriginals meet they say: What's your last name? Cos they can determinate where are you from or where do you are related just by the last name.

The Block is an area in the Redfern neighbourhood where a high proportion of Aboriginal working class people lived, which became one of the main places for those like Richard to find their relatives and kin, and for those arriving from other parts of the country to find information about their relatives and kin who were living in Redfern or in other parts of Sydney. The importance that Aboriginal kinship has, can be explained by the work of the anthropologist Jeremy Beckett. Beckett analyses

Aboriginal mobility as the result of kinship relations which motivate Aboriginal peoples to 'go 200 miles to a place where [they] are known, rather than ten miles to a place where [they] are not' (1988:119). As he explains, their kin provide them with feelings of confidence in the face of past practices and regulations which barred them from public and private spaces.<sup>26</sup> Although these practices and regulations do not exist anymore, it is necessary to signal the importance that Redfern and The Block has had to provide kin contacts. This importance was such that both Redfern and The Block have become identified by Aboriginal peoples as an area of Aboriginality, to, in cases like Richard's, reconstruct kinship. Stolen Generation members<sup>27</sup> and people from other parts of Sydney, NSW and Australia used The Block and Redfern as a 'meeting point' which in turn came to reinforce the Aboriginal political and cultural movements that were forming there.



One of the old houses in The Block where lived Aboriginal people. The preservation of this house is a monument to the activism, history and culture of Redfern (photo by the author).

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<sup>26</sup> Examples of past exclusion and class distinction policies from public schools, clubs, swimming pools, hostels and other places can be seen in Niguel Parbury (2000).

<sup>27</sup> See Fiona Murphy (2011) for understanding the institutionalised removal of fair-skinned Aboriginal people from their families from 1910 until the mid 1970s.

The increased arrival of Aboriginal people in Redfern was dominated by those from rural settlements and reserves, and they came in such numbers that in 1971 Redfern became the largest Aboriginal community in Australia (see Foley 2001, Foley 2010 and Norman 2014). Those arriving joined and contributed to the cultural and political atmosphere that was emerging there, which in turn was influenced by other political developments in Australia. The most important events were: in 1965 the so-called Freedom Ride, directed by the Aboriginal activist Charles Perkins and supported by University of Sydney students, who went to diverse towns of NSW to denounce policies of segregation in areas such as pools, pubs and parks. And in 1972, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy was raised in Canberra, which protested against the conservative Prime Minister McMahon's new policies which refused Aboriginal land rights, and although it was located outside Redfern, it had the support of some of Redfern's activists, such as Gary Foley. These forms of protest were claiming Aboriginal rights and sovereignty. In this unsettled context, a transnational political influence started to get established in Redfern, by the international Black Power. African soldiers from the U.S. who were arriving in Sydney from the war in Vietnam went to Redfern in search of 'other Black' peoples. These soldiers brought with them literature on racial politics in U.S. and Afro-American music. Gary Foley, an Aboriginal historian and activist, was a member of the young Aboriginal generation which formed part of these encounters and a posteriori formed the Black Panthers in Redfern influenced by the Black Panthers Party in the U.S. From there, the first legal aid centre for Aboriginal people emerged, the Aboriginal Legal Service, which collected information about police raids in The Empress Hotel and offered legal service for Aboriginal people in Sydney and other areas of NSW (Foley 2001).

The Aboriginal Legal Service in Redfern and these political movements branched into diverse organisations which gathered cultural and political potential, such as the National Black Theatre, the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, the Murawina Pre-school and others such as an Aboriginal Medical Service, the Aboriginal Housing Company and the alcoholic rehabilitation centre Bennelong's Haven (Parbury 2000). All these organisations provided services for Aboriginal people in Sydney and other parts of NSW, facilitating also the increase of Aboriginal people into education and their employment for and inside the community. It is necessary to signal that these organisations emerged also inside a shift in the political Australian government. As the historian Bain Attwood explains, in 1972 the Australian Labor party, under Gough Whitlam won the federal election, after a long reign of conservative governments committed to assimilationist policies. And in the face of the pressures of the Tent Embassy, other political actions and also the international panorama in which there were surging movements of decolonisation, Black Power and globalisation, he abandoned assimilation and adopted self-determination as a policy (Attwood 2003:349). In this sense, more and more organisations like those in Redfern were claiming self-determination and management in health, education and other spheres.

Out of this time period grew two organisations that have been a great inspiration for both Koori Radio and Moogahlin Performing Arts, respectively: Radio Redfern and the National Black Theatre. Since

these organisations aimed to utilise the radio and theatre as vehicles for expression of Aboriginal voices, they were incorporating Aboriginal subjectivities into an articulation of an identity of resistance. This identity was built by the already mentioned influence of the Black Panther movement. However, we should note that, as both Bain Attwood and Daniel Fisher signal, this articulation of Aboriginality with Blackness was not exempt from controversies. Voices coming from other parts of Australia claimed that the Black Power influence in Redfern had to be re-thought, since Aboriginal people had various differences in relation to the Africans. The most important were that Aboriginal people were also racially marked as Indigenous and that Aboriginal claims were related to land rights. Consequently, diverse voices pointed at the Indigenous movements and decolonisation processes that were happening in the world and called for a greater emphasis on Aboriginal identity (Attwood 2003; Fisher 2016). Nonetheless, as Daniel Fisher explains, Blackness has been a historically variable, charged racial ascription in Australia, that was refashioned and revalorised to become a point of pride and belonging, a resource in political struggles over rights and recognition which was embraced by activists such as Gary Foley in Redfern as a necessary aspect of Aboriginal identity and political power (Fisher, 2016: 16).

All these subjectivities, elements and concerns about sovereignty, land rights and Blackness that cohered together into the Aboriginal identity in Redfern had their reflection in various organisations, such as the National Black Theatre and Radio Redfern. In this chapter I will focus on the Radio Redfern foundation and the inspiration that it had for Koori Radio.

## 2. 'We have got a voice'. From Radio Redfern to Koori Radio

All the mob in Brisbane, all the Murris and Kooris up there, listen and tune in and receive the same program that we get here in Sydney. [...] You fellas are doing a lot on this radio, d'you know? You are doing a thing that we've never heard before.  
[Tiga Bayles. Excerpt from the film "88.9 Radio Redfern" (Bell & Burton 2015)]

The late Tiga Bayles was an Aboriginal broadcaster, singer and actor from Queensland who had an important role in the Aboriginal media in Sydney and Brisbane. The lines above belong to a documentary that was directed by Sharon Bell and Geoff Burton (Bell & Burton 2015) who recorded Radio Redfern broadcasts. Bayles' words explain the impact that Radio Redfern achieved in representing the artistic and political activism in the 80s. As I aim to show in this section, the work of Radio Redfern in getting a voice for the community, helped to articulate a political identity expressed not only through their voices, but also in the music they played in their broadcasts. Thus, music became a central element to reinforce the political activism and the political identity that had been built around the articulation of Aboriginality and Blackness. Later in time, when Koori Radio took

over the role of being ‘the Aboriginal radio station in Sydney’, they also expanded this articulation of Aboriginality with Blackness through music.

*A thing that we’ve never heard before* encapsulates how Aboriginal voices and cultural forms such as music have basically been in the shadow until the appearance of this and other media that were surging; such as the first Aboriginal newspaper ‘Abo Call’ in 1983 and the first Aboriginal radio station, CAMMA, in Alice Springs in 1981. TIGA Bayles helped in the construction of Radio Redfern influenced by experiences he previously had in CAMMA. As Daniel Fisher explains, he went with his mother, Maureen Watson, to Alice Springs and encountered CAMMA radio staff. After this experience they moved to Sydney and started a program in the Sydney community radio 2SER. In 2SER they met Koori people who were also trying to give an Aboriginal voice through the time this radio was giving them to broadcast. These Koori people found later the chance to broadcast for 10 hours a week in a more overtly political radio (Skid Row) and invited TIGA and his mother to work together as Koori Radio inside the Skid Row radio. Skid Row was also formed by unemployed people, single mums, gay and lesbian peoples, people out of jail, migrants and Black peoples, and later extended the time for Radio Redfern programs to forty hours a week (Fisher 2016: 153-154). Thus, as Fisher signals, Radio Redfern became a vehicle for a collective Aboriginal political subject, through the broadcasting of Black music and interviews on the politics of the day, acting also ‘as a kind of meeting point for Aboriginal people coming from outside of Sydney’ (2016: 22).

As I said at the outset, one of the main objectives of Koori Radio is to ‘give a voice’ and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expressions—as well as those of other racially marked groups—in which music is one of the most recursive elements. These are the main elements shared with Radio Redfern which can be seen in the expression of the Black and the Aboriginal—Koori—music in their broadcasts and programs. In order to see how it first started in Radio Redfern I will reproduce here part of some broadcasts (on Bell & Burton documentary 2015) from the times of Radio Redfern which show this articulation and how it is reinforced by linguistic expressions with continued reference to the words ‘Black’ and ‘Koori’ as having the same meaning:

“Black music going here in Radio Redfern [...] With some non-stop Koori music that you requested all. [...] As long as it’s Koori music what you’re requesting I’ll play it for you. Hope you mob are having a happy Black day!”.

Later in the documentary the same broadcaster presents:

“It’s time for the African program to come on air...”

Thus, we can see that the two radios share the significance of cultural expressions of Blackness articulated with Aboriginality through ‘Koori music’. And as well, we can see that these broadcasters were giving space for African music. Recall that African soldiers arriving in Redfern had brought books about Black Power, but also Black music from the U.S. So that these encounters started to be expressed through the music and broadcasts in their shows. The work of Daniel Fisher, which

compares this promotion of Black music in Radio Redfern and Koori Radio with other Aboriginal radios in Australia, tells about the particularity of the articulation of Blackness with Aboriginality in Redfern. He explains that, while in Radio Redfern and Koori Radio Black music speaks to a Black experience and embraces the music of Africa, Afro descendents in U.S. and Australia alike as speaking equally to the experiences of Aboriginal people, other Aboriginal radios argue that such music participates in the racialisation of Aboriginal people and that their efforts should instead be toward underlining the history of colonisation and dispossession (Fisher 2016:19). Although this comparative discussion transcends the objectives of this thesis and, as I will further show, Koori Radio later in time will go further in the element of Blackness and will re-articulate Aboriginality with Indigeneity, I draw from Fisher's account to highlight the particularity in which Radio Redfern first articulated Aboriginal identity from a transnational influence of Blackness, that later was reproduced, extended and re-articulated by Koori Radio. The main reason for this is that Redfern had been the focus of transnational encounters and the experiences and subjectivities that emanated from them were reflected in their daily practices. Both the promotion of Aboriginal music and the promotion a voice for the Aboriginal community about political concerns were the main elements that built Radio Redfern and Koori Radio. Nonetheless, we can see that the element of Blackness acquires a determinant relation in the first construction of this political identity in Redfern, marked by a transnational Black influence.

Radio Redfern kept broadcasting from Skid Row for some years. From conversations and talks I have witnessed in Redfern and other parts of Sydney there is no a clear moment that marks the change from Radio Redfern to Koori Radio. Even though each radio was founded by different people and worked at different times, it is considered that what Koori Radio came to do was to take the spirit of Radio Redfern and the political context in which it arose. Hence this spirit was extended to express what an Aboriginal radio station — in words of my informants— is meant to be: *the voice of the community*, and as I will further explain, a counterpoint to negative representations by mainstream media. Yet as well, it continued with promoting Aboriginal and Black music. Into this articulation also entered the articulation with Torres Strait Islander people, who, as we are going to see, claimed their own space of expression. Sarah, the Torres Strait Islander broadcaster who opened the door when I first went to Koori Radio, was engaging with Koori Radio at this moment of transition from Radio Redfern to Koori Radio:

Cathy [one of the Koori Radio founders] was a student of the University of Technology of Sydney. So they were coming [to the Tranby Aboriginal College in Glebe area] into teach us. And they talked about theatre and radio. But I didn't go on that way cos I thought it was too radical. And one of these fellas passed. He was a very famous Aboriginal photographer. I was too young at the time. I was very intimidated by this radical... It was radical through the art form. And I thought: 'That's too very intimidated. I'm still a student'. So I went and joined a White production company. I was learning a lot about how they see things: very organised.



I didn't come into Radio Redfern. But when I was in that job I thought there was nothing who represents who I am. So when I was in that job and turned on the radio I was: 'Oh, that's more how I like it! That's our voices!' And I thought: 'What's this mob doing here? This Radio Redfern mob?' Because it was coming from the Skid-Row channel then. And my cousin, who was one of the very few TSI around that time, told me: 'Don't just stay over there in the main area, working over there'.

This is 90s. You could tell there was so much happening. It was just raw and ready to explode. And she took me there one day and she said: 'I'll do a show if you do it with me'. I thought we'll bring our Torres Strait Islander heritage, our music. So we started the program I'm doing until now. They didn't even have that! That went up because there was not Torres Strait representation except from my cousin who happened to be a Torres Strait Islander, doing an employment hour show.

People like Cathy, who later was one of the founders of Koori Radio, were participating in the consolidation of media and cultural devices for Aboriginal resistance at the time of Radio Redfern, encouraging more and more people to get involved with them. In the case of Sarah and her cousin, it also provided the chance for Torres Strait Islander people to join into their projects and include their subjectivities and particularities through Torres Strait Islander music. A show that as she says she still runs as volunteer in the radio. And all this Koori, other Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and African music was utilised to support messages of sovereignty and political resistance that had been occurring in Redfern from about 1970s. The peak of one of these activist operations was the "explosion" that occurred in Sydney in 1988, during the Bicentenary celebrations of the arrival of British into Australia. For Aboriginal people this official celebration around the arrival of the First Fleet meant the violence of colonisation. Thus, a broad rejection emerged which attracted to Sydney diverse groups of protestors from various parts of Australia, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, into probably the biggest Aboriginal demonstration ever (see Foley 2010). Radio Redfern and Skid Row broadcasted these protests and exposed the voices of the protestors who talked through the radio. By this time Radio Redfern had moved close to the building where the National Black theatre was. From there and also assisting in diverse actions, Radio Redfern became central to give a voice to the protestors, yet as well to help coordinate the assistance for those arriving to Sydney. As I learned from a respected Aboriginal woman in Redfern, Aunty Rose, the radio broadcasted the things that protestors were needing for those who were arriving and to make sure everyone could know the latest information:

Aunty Rose: They used to go asking people what did they need: a blanket or whatever. And then they announced it on the radio.

After this massive protest, Radio Redfern kept broadcasting, but the buildings of both Radio Redfern and the National Black Theatre were bulldozed in 1991. In 1993 Cathy Craigie, Matthew Cook and Tim Bishop 'took over' the role of being the Aboriginal radio station in Sydney and founded Koori Radio, starting to work again with the generosity of Skid Row to later move to The Block. They got a licence to broadcast in 2001. It operated in diverse sites in the following years until in 2008 the radio

got into the building where the National Black Theatre was which had been refurbished. Both Radio Redfern and Koori Radio came to be the Aboriginal radio of Sydney, which achieved sovereignty to represent their own voices and works, something that was also occurring at other Aboriginal radios in Australia. As argued by Marcia Langton (Langton 1993) and Daniel Fisher (Fisher 2005) Aboriginal media are political and representational. Many activists in Australia have seen a ‘crucial link between social reproduction, the decolonization of consciousness, and the Indigenous production of Indigenous media’ (Fisher 2005:38). Yet it is the particularity of Radio Redfern and Koori Radio around the articulation of the political identity of Aboriginality with Blackness, which made these two radios specially significant when cohering with other communities and transnational movements in Redfern. Yet as I aim to be showing, this conjuncture did not make impossible the expression of Aboriginal concerns, subjectivities and identity. It rather gave it more power through transnational voices support.

As I have been saying, music and other cultural expressions in the radio helped to build and express this articulation. As I will show with ethnographic data in chapters eight and nine, Koori Radio has continued with the idea of having programs exclusively dedicated to Koori and other Aboriginal music and programs for Africans—as well as other ethnic groups—at the radio station as Radio Redfern did. This music and the transnational political influence of Black Power facilitated the term ‘Black’ to act as a contingent sign for diverse groups in Koori Radio. Avtar Brah (Brah 2011) has explained how the term ‘Black’ can act as a contingent sign for ethnic groups who share this racial marker as Blacks. In the following section, I will show how Koori Radio reproduces this behaviour to cohere with other ethnic groups that are also racially marked as Black, yet how simultaneously they also embrace another concept—Indigenous—which firstly, helps to cohere with more members at the radio, and secondly and importantly, it incorporates discussions about Indigeneity that are not so well handled simply by the concept of Blackness.

### 3. ‘Brothers from another mother and sisters from another mister’

Although Koori were the dominant people in the radio, from my first days I could witness the high presence of Aboriginal people from other parts of Australia who had moved to Sydney such as Western Australia; others whose parents were from other Aboriginal nations from the Australian main land and the Torres Strait Islands and had grown up in Sydney or moved there; and as well people such as Joe, a Maori, who had moved to live to Sydney. Between the latter, there were people who had joined them to work or volunteer in some radio show, such as Ganan, a Sri Lankan man who worked in the office, John of Cherokee background who broadcast with the Grandfather, Alicia a Fiji volunteer who ran a Fiji show and some African broadcasters such as Rachel from Nigeria. All of them were called by the Aboriginal workers at the radio *brothers from another mother and sisters from another mister*. To understand how all these people and others of other backgrounds are seen as ‘brothers’ and

‘sisters’ of Aboriginal people, the Blackness concept would be insufficient. As I aim to show, what Koori Radio comes to do is to articulate Aboriginality with two contingent signs able to gather not only those who are racially marked as Black —such as the case of Rachel and other Africans in the radio— but also as Indigenous peoples. Thus, the articulation of Aboriginality came to be cohered with the experiences of other people who had been racially marked by their bodies and skin colour and/or colonial experiences. Significantly, this conjunction is possible because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been doubly labeled and racially marked in Australia as both ‘Black’ and ‘Indigenous’. I will go closer into the analysis of the articulation of Aboriginality with Blackness and Indigeneity through creative works in chapters eight and nine where we will see there is not really a distinction between themselves in the radio. However, I find it analytically useful to make some distinction here to explain how the articulation of Aboriginality takes form in Redfern and Koori Radio. I will return to the conversation with Sarah, one of the broadcasters who was involved in Koori Radio from its beginnings, to show how these people started to meet in the radio:

[At the beginning], there were at least two African broadcasters and there were all the Pacific Islander broadcasters. There was a Lebanese broadcaster who went to University of Technology Sydney. A lot of the people who used to come were through networks. The founders were looking for people from other backgrounds because at that time of test transmitting we were trying to go for a broadcasting licence. Other radios were trying it too. So, the difference with the lobbying for the licence was, statistically, a very clever move from Cathy. It was to look at statistically what’s the demographic of Sydney Indigenous people. The largest population was the Pacific Islander, that we know off. We know we can get them on board because they are neighbours and there’s always been a connection between the Maori mob and other Pacific mobs. So we thought hopefully we’ll get them on board. And if you look at the other minorities who were at the time, a lot of the students who were Africans, and also we had a couple of Lebanese and Turkish fellas. Very supportive. Timorese also. There was a hub of people who could come and feel a part of.

When they come here, they see they have one thing in common which is music and talking about your people, which is what they all did as part of the programming... They were given an hour or half an hour to do a show. But statistically as well if you look at the program guide, the grill, how are they going to sell it to a broadcasting authority? What was gonna give us the licence? And basically you have to involve other people because, really, it was a proper tour reflection of what the voices in Sydney was, because Sydney is very multicultural.

When applying for a licence and Koori Radio looked at the demographic statistic of Sydney Indigenous peoples this made a difference with the lobbying for such licence: Maoris, Africans, Pacific Islanders, Lebanese, Turkish and later others such as Sri Lankans constituted different *minorities* inside Sydney. Yet *minority* became a *majority* to lobby under the contingent signs of ‘Black’ and ‘Indigenous’. Yet which are the experiences these people can share which facilitate the articulation of diverse identities and subjectivities into a mediated project? Their experiences in mass cultural and

media industries, which I will further extend, made these people believe that they were sharing the same objective: to provide a voice for their minority ethnic groups and eliminate a series of stereotypes and racial markers over themselves. Insofar as African soldiers approached to Redfern in search of 'peers', other ethnic groups approached Koori Radio looking for something in similar terms. So that, Koori Radio created a unique policy in Australia by which they played 99% of Black and Indigenous music in order to favour those ethnic groups who shared a similar historical trajectory; i.e.: they share an historical injustice by either a colonial past and/or a racial marginalization. In this context, the very physical criteria based on colonialist divisions of skin colour that historically have been used to exclude, are used by the radio to include.

The shared experiences that get to unite Aboriginality, Blackness and Indigeneity into an articulation are explained in the analysis that Frantz Fanon (Fanon, 2008) offers for the concept of 'colonial racism'. He states that 'colonial racism' is no different from other forms of racism. Yet in 'colonial racism', the binomial 'superior/inferior' that was established since the emergence of 'modern racism' based on biological assumptions, acts as an axis of oppression based on skin colour hierarchies and colonial relations. In the most current present, the colonial and racial legacy is represented in the way that these people have seen their chances to work in the mass cultural and media industries based on their physical appearance. What all these people come to do at the radio is to try to give a voice to their communities and as Sarah says, to promote the music of their countries; i.e. each of these subjects will run with others or by themselves programs about their countries and the music of their countries. Such that, Koori Radio becomes the voice of not only the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander communities yet also of those who engage. Nomenclatures used to describe and group communities are politically molded based on institutional and social definitions which incorporate ethnic groups inside a position in the society. The way that Aboriginal people define themselves comes to contest these external definitions of Blackness and Indigeneity and goes further than skin colour divisions. Yet as well and importantly, the way that Aboriginals introduce peoples of other backgrounds in the radio is also related to how they see themselves as Aboriginals and Blacks in Sydney and how they try to make 'a good thing' of the Blackness and Indigeneity.

By returning to the importance that cultural expressions like music have, I reproduce here part of a conversation with Rachel, the Nigerian woman who volunteered in the radio. In it, can be seen the significance of music to attract other ethnic groups:

One day, after two months when I got to Australia a friend of mine gave me a small radio as a birthday gift. So I was just turning in, and I heard African music playing. So I said: 'My goodness!! Do they get an African station all the way from here?' Then I thought: 'Maybe it's one of these Sudanese...' Then I said: 'No, they can't play this. This is Nigeria music!!' And then somebody told me: 'Oh, there's a radio station here, Redfern. They have some Nigerian music; they play African music there, all the time'. I didn't ask further and I didn't even know that I'd be part of that. So I left the radio on that station. So most of the time it doesn't play

African music. But I usually heard African music on that radio Sunday afternoon. And that's Keita. Oh, Keita! I think I listened to you even before I knew what's Koori Radio!

Rachel is a journalist experienced in a TV-radio channel in Nigeria who moved to Sydney and got a position in mainstream Australian radio. After experiencing what she said were racist behaviours from some staff, she left this channel and went to volunteer to Koori Radio while working in the care sector. As she explains in the extract above she got to know about Koori Radio through the African music that it played. When she left the mainstream radio somebody from there took her to Koori Radio saying that she would feel better with Aboriginal people. Then that is how she got to know the radio station she had listened to. As she said to me several times, Koori Radio came to be for her an emotional refuge where to meet other people who were 'much more welcoming' to her; and which at the same time permitted her to volunteering in what she liked most: media. As she always said: 'This, Koori Radio, is my real job. The other jobs, are just bills-paid jobs!'

Rachel's narration was similar to others that were described for me by other members of the radio. For instance, Joe, the Maori man who ran a show assured that it was in Australia where he got to 'really experience racism for first time' in his life and that he went to Koori Radio to do his own show which mainly plays Maori and other Pacific Islander and Black music. He first went to Koori Radio through two friends who were working there and started a show of 'Black' music to later do another one by himself more focused on Maori and Pacific Islander music.

Although Koori and other Aboriginal people were the dominant in number at Koori Radio, it did surprise me to see such a presence of people from overseas in this radio, who instead of going to another of the many surrounding local radio stations went there to volunteer their times without any wage. When I commented on it with some of the Aboriginal workers there they found a 'simple' reason: 'This is a Black thing of people of colour who have the same struggles and understand each other'. As we have seen in the case of Entrecalles there exist some necessities and shared experiences in 'minority' and racially marked groups that make them search for engagements where to find mutual understanding. Yet we also saw in these cases, that it is important for the articulation of identities that diverse subjectivities can be expressed. The manner in which diverse subjectivities come to be expressed through the radio is *definitely* through *music*. Rachel played on her show mostly African music; Joe, Pacific Islander music, as well as other broadcasters. So that, we should consider that when the Aboriginal agenda was created by principles of contesting racial segregation and colonial domination, these principles could also be applied to many other societies in the world. And when Koori Radio accepted more people they did include them on this agenda and — more importantly— they provided a space for them to express their subjectivities and identities through shows they run and design on their own —with the support of the managers— with a significant opportunity to use their own languages.

As we are seeing, the theory of articulation is very pertinent for explaining all these processes. Also here Avtar Brah's inputs are helpful regarding this case study. She explains that insofar as we, as human beings, develop our first sense of community inside a neighbourhood, we quickly learn to see ourselves as part of many other 'imaginary communities'. They are imaginary to the extent that it is possible that they have not met before. Yet they learn to identify ourselves with other groups, their experiences, their struggles. These are the processes of political identification to create coherent communities, not to erase diversity yet rather to appreciate the particular inside the 'universal', or the 'universal' inside the 'particular' (Brah 2011: 121). The reinforcement of these alliances in the Koori Radio case were reproduced with the use of Aboriginal kinship nomenclatures such as *bro*, brother, *sis*, sister, *sistar*, or the mentioned: 'brothers from another mother, sisters from another mister'.

Inside all this multiculturality it should not be neglected to acknowledge the diversity inside the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations and social classes. As said at the beginning of this chapter, Redfern and Sydney have been attracting Aboriginal peoples from diverse parts of Australia from mid-1960 and they have achieved different social positions. Yet somehow or another they supported each other under the contingent sign of Aboriginal. In this regard, I find very interesting how Sarah says she got to better express her Torres Strait identity in Sydney through listening to the programs of other broadcasters:

I identify as main-land Torres Strait Islander as I spent most of my life living on the main land. And when I listen to the Fijian community, I learn a lot. Or I listen to the Maori program and learn what a Maussie is. What's the meaning to be a Maussie, which is a Maori Australian. Somebody who was born here and lives here and what's the differences? There's not difference from being here on the mainland and on the Torres Strait Islands. I lived in the community of the Torres Strait but my daughter hasn't. She's never been in the Torres Strait. D'you know? Like she's very much a mainland Torres Strait Islander. And all this, I learnt it through listening to the radio. I think I wouldn't have learnt it anywhere else.

Whereas before we saw that some sort of 'interest' for achieving a broadcasting licence to unite diverse minority groups existed, this has consolidated thanks they were able to articulate their diversities and coexist. Koori Radio has been a way for them to share various subjectivities, experiences, identities, to form part of the same project. However, this should not be understood as a way to 'neglect' Aboriginality. At the same time, Koori Radio has been working to maintain a strong alliance with other Aboriginal communities, connecting with other Aboriginal radio stations *sisters* in Australia. Everyday these radio stations connect with each other and broadcast nationally through the National Indigenous Radio Service based in Brisbane. This produces a wider echo of the Black and Indigenous music played by them and their voices; but overall, it reinforces their Aboriginality. The below picture shows the first fridge that Koori Radio had which nowadays remains there as a memory. It is decorated with stickers from other Aboriginal radio stations and different prizes Koori Radio has obtained. These stickers symbolise *sisters* relationships with other radio stations. I was told that if

someone from the radio goes to another Aboriginal radio station, they had to take a Koori Radio sticker with her/him and bring one back from the other sister station. The first time I saw this fridge on my initial fieldwork in the radio somehow it reminded me of the film *Green Bush* (Thornton 2005). This film reproduces the life of a broadcaster in a remote community who at the same time as he is broadcasting has to attend to members of the community who come and sit down for a chat, a cup of tea or for personal concerns. The story tells about Warwick Thornton's own experiences as broadcaster and DJ on his show 'Green Bush' at the CAAMA radio station in Alice Springs. In the film the radio is shown as a place for encounter for members of the Aboriginal community. On my first day at the radio, when I was talking with Heather I commented about this film. She responded: 'You will see that some days Koori Radio is also like in the film!'. Daniel Fisher has also analysed this film (Fisher 2009, 2016) and signals that what this broadcaster and DJ does is to 'link up' so looking after kin is another responsibility of radio production. The film shows the presenter having to cook food, make cups of tea for members of the community who arrive and help to solve some problems they have. This is also what I could see at Koori Radio, as Heather advised: people going and coming, sometimes, just to have a 'yarn'. Yet I can say that one of the main differences between the 'yarn-hall', the kitchen and the sofa of the radio film and Koori Radio is that the later is not only frequented by the Aboriginal communities but also by Black, Indigenous and any of the many and diverse peoples engaged in the radio.



Fridge at Koori Radio (photo by the author)

#### 4. Redfern in the media and the public imaginary

I have mentioned a few times that another of the objectives of both Radio Redfern and Koori Radio has been to counteract the negative representations on the dominant media about Aboriginal people. Their work has been also to unite discontented voices with dominant representations of Aboriginal people and create self-representations. I will now go deeper into this analysis by making a tour of some of their claims, some stereotypes that have been formed around the construction of ‘the Aboriginal’ and specially about Redfern. For the latter, I will provide some instances on how the imaginary of the prototype of ‘Aboriginal in Redfern’ is also reaching to non-Australians. This will be provided with my own experiences as an outsider located in Redfern and the many conversations I witnessed of both Australians and non-Australians about Redfern. Much of the representations of Redfern correspond to a reality from the past regarding The Block with high rates of drug use and cases of violence during the 80-90s. The activism —and its media coverage—that was there in Redfern in the 1970-80s and the cases of drug consumption during the 1980-90s has made this area come to be viewed as specially conflictive above any other in Sydney. Yet it is interesting here to see how much the images of the past come to the present today and remains in the social imaginary and how much this is influenced by mass media focus on narratives that ‘link’ with that past. As we will see, various authors argue that the effect of the repeated media images on criminality and drug abuse has contributed to various stereotypes. Specifically, the work of Don Weatherburn, which focuses on riots and other conflicts between police and Aboriginal people in Redfern, states that ‘media contribute to outbreaks of disorder by sensitising the police and the public to the possibility that conflict might occur’ (Weatherburn 2006:23; see also Morris 2013). The work of Koori Radio instead comes to reinforce the political struggles towards self-representation of Aboriginal heterogeneity.

These negative representations of Redfern have a longer history and are related to the political activity underway there. Gary Foley explains that already from 70-80s mass media played a pivotal role in the representation of the Black Power movement, exalting an aura of conflict in their political actions (Foley 2010). This was continued with focus on narratives about riots and clashes that occurred with the police. This is the time in which The Empress Hotel was opened and was very frequented by Aboriginal people, and where there also took place some conflicts with the police. In an event that I attended about the past and present of Redfern, Aunty Rose, the respected Aboriginal woman in Redfern, provided some examples that explain the agitation of those times with the presence of journalists and police in the area:

Aunty: Aboriginal people living in Sydney, specially,... Something happens and it’s on the front page: some negative story of Aboriginal people. And we think: ‘Oh, what’s going on over there that they are trying to distract us from?’ I grew up in a suburb in the mainstream area. I went to the [Empress] Hotel with all the Aboriginal girls. I came back. And Waterloo and Redfern at the time,.. There was a little bit of robbery. In a way,.. Not robbery but it was like: ‘I don’t live in Redfern, I live in Waterloo!’ [people in the audience laugh]. And there



was different groups of friends, d'you know? And there was this sort of thing in there,.. Yeah,.. So for me growing up in that mainstream,.. The first time I went to the pub which used to be on the top of The Block, I was seated thinking: 'On my god, I hope none sees me!' And I was seriously keeping my head down. I didn't want anybody to see me seated in.

There was a group of people here, and a group of people,... d'you know? Everyone seated in around, just seated on the grass and having a couple of beers. And I looked at the top of The Block and I saw a guy and I saw he was a photographer. Because bright light came on. And I said: 'What is he doing?' And then the police went down Eveleigh Street, which is a sort of the first main one going down. They went to a house, they arrested a 16 years old boy. And everyone got: 'Oh my god, look at them!' Eventually they got somebody and run away. They call it riots,.. D'you know?

Anyway, so,.. There was a riot. And d'you know? It was in the papers. And I said: 'Why they didn't drive their car into his house and put him straight in the car and drive him off the bottom?' Nobody would ever knew! But the point was the camera got there before the police! So I was watching all the whole time and I always would say: 'Why was the camera there before the police? Why they didn't drive the car to this house and put him straight on their car?' They know he's not gonna walk so you got two big policemen and one of about 16 years old kid at the street in front of a bunch of people who are having a peaceful couple of beers, d'you know?

Catie Gilchrist explains how during the 1960-70s Aboriginal people in Redfern suffered arbitrary arrests and detentions, on many occasions for public drunkenness and as a result of police patrolling at hotels such as The Empress (Gilchrist 2015). Repeated media reports about riots like the above description of Auntie Rose contributed to the creation of stereotypes of the 'Aboriginal in Redfern' in relation to criminality and drug consumption (see similar instances in Morris 2013). Although, as both Gillian Cowlshaw and Marcia Langton (Langton 1997) argue, the stereotype of the 'drunken Aborigine' is 'well and truly reinstalled in the public mind' (Cowlshaw, 2003:210) in a general way, as said before, it is the activism in Redfern during the 70-80s and the cases of drug consumption during the 80-90s that made this area be seen as specially conflictive above any other in Sydney, to the extent that, as Auntie Rose suggests, fear towards Redfern was created and extended by some Aboriginal people. In this regard, the work of Lambert-Pennington on the Aboriginal Sydney community in La Perouse shows evidences and voices of Aboriginal people in La Perouse who, echoing media characterisations, describe Redfern and specially The Block as place of violence, junkies and drunks (Lambert-Pennington 2012:139). Yet significantly, The Block is a place of Aboriginality articulated with Blackness as part of the past political activism and Aboriginal resistance.

Koori Radio workers were concerned that this image became the unique focus of the media not only because it creates a negative representation that can get into the imaginary of people yet also because

of the effect that portraits of ‘bad Aboriginal models’ can have on young generations who could internalise these ‘bad models’. Thus, Koori Radio has worked towards representations that tell ‘other stories, not only the negative ones’, as a way to achieve some sovereignty over the representation of themselves. In this regard, Marcia Langton explains that the work of urban Aboriginal media like Koori Radio is a ‘way to demand control of representation’ (Langton 1993:9). As another of the workers at Koori Radio, David, told me, the presence of Aboriginal media like Koori Radio was guaranteeing that more voices were heard:

If they [mass media] do portray something in a negative light or it’s not the truth now they realise there are organizations like Koori Radio, d’you know, the Koori Mail,..., our own media, who will hold them to account. D’you know? You got Aboriginal programs on television, d’you know, in the SBS, the ABC and stuff in that industry. We are in that industry. Whether they like it or not, we are colleagues. So we will hold you to account. So, we know what journalists are supposed to do. D’you know?, like: We’re not just sitting back here letting you say whatever you want.

Likewise, this concern about diverse stereotypes around Aboriginal people was expressed during the broadcasts. A conversation between two young guys, Susanne and Paul, with a guest broadcaster during one of their shows exemplifies it:

Susanne: I was at work today and I said I was coming to Koori Radio. Usually when I say this to people they ask me: ‘So, do you live in Redfern? And do you work with the community there?’ And my answer is: ‘No, I don’t live in Redfern, but I work with the community’.

Paul: Are you saying that as you are Aboriginal people assume that you live in Redfern?

Susanne: Yes! Because these are the kind of questions that people make us, as Aboriginals. It’s the kind of stereotype; as you are Aboriginal they think you live in Redfern.

Broadcaster guest: There are other kind of questions that sometimes people ask me when they know I’m Aboriginal; like, ‘how many siblings do you have?’ And I answer 4. And then they say: ‘Do they all have the same dad?’

Susanne: Oh, that’s so...!

Paul: Yeah, or sort of things like: ‘I have 4 siblings’. And they say: ‘Ah, who is your father?’

Guest: I always say that the best we can do is to ignore them.

Paul: And educate them.

Guest: And move on.

Paul: Yeah, we have to tell our young fellas out there that we have to ignore them but also to educate them and move on, not to keep on that.

Susanne: Yeah, we need to give this message for the young people.

I had the chance to interview these two broadcasters at the same time. The interview became like one of their shows in which they both debate about any concern they have and I became the guest:

Susanne: Redfern isn’t as bad as people portray us.

Paul: No.

Susanne: I mean, around Redfern there is a real sense of community. I mean, you get discuss here and there but it's not different to anyone else in the world where people, d'you know, have their differences. I don't think Redfern should be picked on that just because we're Indigenous people. It's ridiculous in my mind.

Ángeles: Well, I'm not going to deny that there are people with problems with alcohol, but they are Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

Susanne: Yeah. You just can have a look at the Melbourne Cup. It's a joke, but you can just have a look on it, the amount of people who have an issue with alcohol at the Melbourne Cup.

Paul: And gambling.

Susanne: But they wouldn't portray that. It's a national portrait of people, d'you know? But if we wanna do something like that where Aboriginals have an event where alcohol is being served and d'you know, gambling, the media would turn it around and make it like we have a problem with it.

Paul: It depends on the event. You can't just generalise that there. Let's say the majority,...

Susanne: But if you see the pictures: Aboriginal people land on the ground,..

Paul: Clearly! If the people pass out on the floor,... Did you see people on the floor during the Melbourne Cup?

Susanne: Yes!

Paul: You did... And it wouldn't be funny for sure.

Susanne: It was funny! Because that's what the media wanted to be. It was funny, d'you know, these people passed out until next year. If it was Aboriginal people hanging around the amount of racist comment would be ridiculous and Andrew Bolt<sup>28</sup> would have a fair with it.

Quite often, with much sensationalism, mass media and internet resources become virtual spaces where public debates are created about Aboriginal issues, in which the already mentioned stereotypes and others are reproduced. In the issue of 'self representation' vs 'stereotyped representations', Langton points at the difficulty to differentiate between the visual and the textual on 'negative/positive' images, which in turn makes it harder to diagnose in visual models forms of racism and sexism (Langton 1996:42). She explains how subjects carry on themselves an imposed and constructed load by stereotyped texts and bodies in which a discourse is hidden. And as she explains, one of the main consequences of this is that many non-Aboriginal people in Australia only know about Aboriginal people through mediated forms (Langton 2003:119). Although, as she says, the 'solution' is not to portrait only positive images, she proposes to provide images and narratives that show Aboriginal heterogeneity, in which the 'bad models' are not the unique vision. To understand the effect

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<sup>28</sup> Andrew Bolt is considered as one of the most controversial columnists in Australia who on numerous occasions have contributed to foster debates in relation to Aboriginal issues. See some instances of Andrew Bolt's controversial discussions which have had an important echo in the society through media on Bolt (2009, 2104). Also some debates with the Aboriginal anthropologist Maria Langton (Preiss 2014; ABC Indigenous 2014).

that the extended image of Aboriginal ‘bad/negative’ models can have, I will provide some instances of the many conversations I witnessed about ‘Aboriginal Redfern’ from my first days.

Upon my arrival to Sydney I went to Macquarie University. There I had to provide some university staff with my address so that the Ministry of Immigration could know where I lived. The person who was welcoming me — of Asian background— reacted astonished when I told her I had rented a room in Redfern. She looked at the people who were around us and softly suggested to me other parts of the city which were *nice to live*. I took it that she was worried about my security; a worry that many others would express several times. A few days before, I had gone to see Redfern for the first time. I happened to take one of the exits at Redfern station that took me to some murals which surround the closest buildings: the Aboriginal Housing and The Block. These murals formed part of a project directed at young people in Redfern to prevent blood borne viruses such as Hep C and HIV. They came to be after a series of workshops in 1997 and 1998 between artists and members of the community who were discussing and exposing their experiences who drew into these murals their conclusions: ‘Say no to drugs: for the next generation’ (see 1999 Tribes ‘The mob’ mural project, n/d). These murals were reflecting the past times of high consumption of drugs in The Block. However, the reality I found had changed. Those people who in the past had been related to these activities had been removed from the area and in fact, The Block was subjected to discussions between Aboriginal people and institutions about some plans to “reform” the area. Furthermore, while in the past there was a predominant population of working class people, during the last years there had been an increase of middle classes and non-Aboriginal people living there, a point that I will further expand. This led to an increase in the prices of the leases. I was renting an expensive and small room in a shared old house close to Redfern Park. Soon after I moved there, one of my housemates — a White Australian in his mid-twenties— was another of the ‘advisers’ who wanted to warn me:

I had plenty of Aboriginal friends, from the gym... But now I only have one, cos he’s not like the others. He also says Aboriginals should move on. I know you are going to hate me for what I’m going to say, but I don’t like them. I don’t understand why they keep in the past. Look at African people, Indian people. They are doing it. We said Sorry!<sup>29</sup> What else do they want? We give them money and help them, and they keep moaning. My Aboriginal mate... he’s my best mate; he’s not like them. He says he doesn’t understand them either. They keep taking alcohol, drugs,... You can’t be having a peaceful drink on a terrace in Redfern. They always come asking for money. Stop complaining and do something with your life, d’you know? They are terrible!

Some days later I was alone in the kitchen of our house and his *best Aboriginal mate* arrived. He approached me and introduced himself as Aboriginal. Before I could say a word he told me: ‘There’s

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<sup>29</sup> There are open debates about different approaches from diverse governments to Aboriginal people through Reconciliation campaigns which have expressed ‘Sorry’ for injustices against Aboriginal peoples such as the case of Stolen Generations. This Reconciliation process was initiated in 1991 by Hawke government (see Burgmann 2003 and Cowlshaw 2009) and remains open until this writing.

so much racism outside with Aboriginal people, isn't there?' Then he smiled and left the kitchen. This is an instance of the many times in which I did not even need to ask to get to be told about some extended pejorative images about Aboriginal people in Redfern. This advice just came to me, from many people who thought that as an outsider I did not very well know 'what I was getting into'. Their advice came with descriptions about criminality and drug addiction of Aboriginal people. Yet what took my attention more is the amount of non-Australians, such as students and incoming workers who reproduced the same assertions even though they had never met an Aboriginal person. A Colombian student living in Redfern affirmed having been told by his teacher to 'be careful with the group of Aboriginals who walk around Redfern Park during the night, hitting non-Aboriginals. Even Latin Americans, who are Black people too!'. Another young worker affirmed having a Latin American friend who had denounced a group of Aboriginals for robbery and had been told by the police in Redfern they were hamstrung and unable to "touch them" due to their bad relationship from the past. Very frequently I heard these international people affirming Aboriginal people can 'get any money from governments to do anything they want'. Meanwhile some domestic peoples were more cautious and sarcastic with comments such as: 'Does any Aboriginal person remain living in Redfern?' I also found myself having to pick up domestic friends at Redfern station as they did not feel safe. Some other people, like an academic colleague, would ask me: 'Have you thought which security measures you are going to take when you start your research in Redfern?' And as well, my landlord, to whom I explained about the research, told me:

Landlord: But are there any Aboriginal left in Redfern?

Ángeles: Yeah, plenty. Many of them live in Waterloo [near area] though.

L: In those high-rise flat buildings?

Á: Yeah.

L: And is it not dangerous to work with them?

Á: Not at all.

L: Really? You have to be careful.

Á: Well, nothing happened to me so far.

There was silence for a while and then we talked about how expensive it was starting to be to live in Redfern area.

L: Yeah, yeah. This area is so in the centre. And we have to keep this house intact, cos it's a 200 years old house and it's protected. We can't change anything. If we repair something, we have to leave it as it was.

Á: I heard that Redfern has changed a lot.

L: Yeah, yeah. It was very dangerous before; with all those problems with drugs, alcohol and things like that with Aboriginals.

For about eighteen months when I was living in Redfern I did not witness any case of criminality yet people I talked with kept arguing they do. When I asked them if they had witnessed those things

happening while living in Redfern some answered sentences such as: ‘It doesn’t matter, you just have to read the news. And you’ll see that they’re things happening everyday’.<sup>30</sup> All these instances I have shown prove the effect and contribution of media on the ‘social imagery’, presenting a unique vision about Aboriginality. The work of Koori Radio trying to ‘educate’ others not only contributes to contesting stereotypes but also reinforces their identity by making of the Aboriginality something good, and showing ‘good models’ for younger generations. In the last part of this chapter, I will show a shift that was produced about half way through my stay in Redfern in relation to the focus about Aboriginal people in Redfern.



The Block on my first arrival to Redfern, December 2013 (photo by the author)

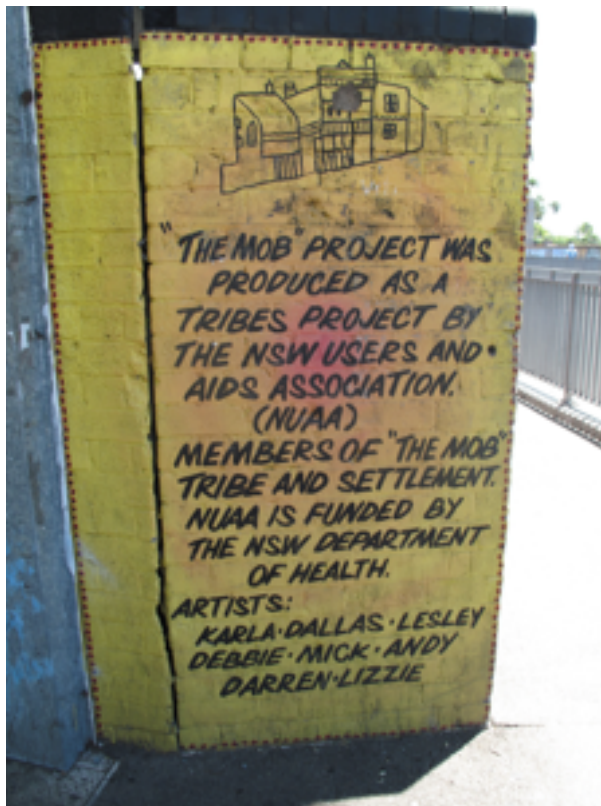
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<sup>30</sup> See some news instances referring to conflicts in Redfern on Barrett 2014; Jackson 2004; Marshal 2013









Murals at Redfern Station (photos by the author)



## 5. Behind the CBD: The Block, Aboriginal land and Housing projects

Good morning to the Mob in the Tent in The Block out there! And good morning to all the Aboriginal Tents around Australia! (Koori Radio 93.7FM, 01 August 2014)



Tent Embassy at The Block (May 2015). On the back there is a view of the high towers of the Sydney CBD (photo by the author)

In the lines above there is an extract from Greg, a Koori Radio staff member who was greeting the Tent Embassy settled in The Block from May 2014 to protest against urban planning to renew The Block. As much as Redfern is a reference of Aboriginality in Sydney, The Block is a sacred area where Aboriginal ceremonies such as smoking ceremonies can be performed. It has been highlighted as sacred through the activity of a group of Aboriginal activists in the Tent Embassy, which is both political and spiritual, in the sense that The Block symbolises resistance and survival of Aboriginality. It is one of the remaining symbols of Aboriginality in Sydney, represented with a big Aboriginal flag painting on a wall. Previously I mentioned the significance of The Block as a place of the articulation of Aboriginality with the Black movement in the past; yet we will see now how this is re-articulated in the present by giving to the place its significance inside Indigeneity. It is a place claimed as ‘sacred’ by

Aboriginal people who claim it as such against the neoliberal urban plans in the area. The new plans to rebuild the area with new houses have been a focus of much discussions and disagreement between Aboriginal people, becoming a trendy topic in the mass media. Tensions between Aboriginal people running the Aboriginal Housing Company — whose purpose is to redevelop The Block into commercial and students apartments— and those in the Tent who seek to affordable housing for Aboriginal people (see Norman 2014) are the main focus of the media. While this focus highlights the ‘inability’ of Aboriginal people to agree, the reality of these discussions is on the ways that this sacred area symbol of Aboriginality is subjected to the neoliberal urban planning of a neighbourhood close to the central business district (CBD) which is very well connected with two main train stations: Central and Redfern stations. Thus the analysis now is to see how Redfern, an area that has been so important for the Aboriginal struggles in the past, where several organisations are still settled and which symbolises ‘an Aboriginal land’ inside the settled Sydney, is passing through a process of privatisation and neoliberal urban planning for middle classes.

As I said before, Redfern was a predominantly a working class area which, after the displacement of Aboriginal people from The Block in the 90s, started a process of urban refurbishment. From about the beginning of 2000 there was an increase of middle class non-Aboriginal people, which became more evident in my time there with new restaurants and supermarkets arriving. The Grandfather, who had been moving around Redfern and The Block explained to me how this process took place:

Because the Olympics were coming up! So it was the Sydney Olympic happening and they didn’t want the people to be in the centre of the city. So what they do then is start the plan, dispersing people out of The Block. Because in the 80s The Block would be in a reputation, cos there’s a lot of drugs, there’s a lot of violence, a lot of,.. D’you know what I mean? A lot of,..., down there. But it was still,... How many in the community?! D’you know what I mean? I used to go down there, I used to,... It wasn’t,.. It wasn’t really how the media portrayed the place. And of course, once you see how the media does the thing, you have the mainstream media that anyway does the thing and contaminates race of people, the area. So everyone is punished.

Anyway! There was that dispersion in Redfern which is probably once the Sydney Olympic came around and they started moving people out West, leaving people away and giving them, ..., and offering houses they’re still living in now; but anywhere near Redfern. Redfern is right in the CBD, between two of the busiest train stations in the city. It’s a gold mine! Ha, ha, ha,... It’s really a gold mine!!

But anyway realistically it’s Aboriginal land. The Block was given to Aboriginal people back in the 70s-80s.

Ángeles: Was [it] given back?

Grandfather: Yeah. That’s why you have the Aboriginal Housing Company that owns the land there,...

What The Block Tent Embassy's voices were claiming was that from this time there was a form of gentrification in Redfern and The Block with eviction of Aboriginal people from their houses. As the Grandfather says, in 1973, during the federal government of Gough Whitlam The Block *was given back* through a grant provided to the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) to build affordable houses for Aboriginal people, who in many cases were living in poor conditions. The Whitlam government, as mentioned before was the first government that moved away from assimilationist policies and this AHC was a form of sovereignty and a source to offer affordable houses for the dominant working class people in Redfern. Yet as both Heidi Norman (Norman 2014) and Eve Vincent (Vincent 2006) signal, from 2004, there was a period in which riots in Redfern took place and again this place became the focus of mass media. It was followed by a dispersion of Aboriginal people; a dispersal that became a major attraction for 'the capital growth in the near future' (Norman 2014:1). Parallel, plans from the NSW and City of Sydney governments to redevelop the area were conducted through the Redfern-Waterloo Authority Act (9RWA). This act gave legal authority to the government in detriment to heritage laws and implied the major development would not be built where Aboriginal people hang out (Vincent 2006:4). Yet from the riots time in 2004 the houses which were built by AHC were partially demolished or occupied as squats and those which continued as Aboriginal houses were not under maintenance. A lack of funding for the AHC marked by neoliberal tendencies opened the doors for commercial development very close to the CBD since NSW and local governments saw in this neoliberal philosophy a way to 'address social problems' (Norman 2014:5).

The Grandfather was one of the few persons at Koori Radio who chatted with me about what was happening there. Many of them did not want to get involved into this discussion. Asking about The Block I learnt that when my informants answered 'I don't know' meant I should not ask anymore. However, on the day that the Tent Embassy was settled, on 26th May 2014, some of those who were in the radio went to The Block to see what was happening. The radio signal had gone off and while some stayed at the station trying to solve this problem to broadcast others decided to go there. At that moment I barely knew what was happening, until the next day I read in the newspapers its coverage. Already the disagreement between members of the community started to be highlighted. To better understand the scope of this focus on disagreement between Aboriginal people, I will continue with the exposition that Aunty Rose was giving about the history of Redfern, in November 2014:

[A White Australian man in the audience asks Aunty Rose]: The last thing you said,..., about what's happening in The Block at the moment. What's your opinion? I mean,.. Most Australians can see one gentleman who is Indigenous and who can't understand with other Indigenous peoples. So,...

Aunty: Yeah,.. I pretty much don't like to comment too much. I don't,... The sad thing for me is that two Aboriginal people sort of,..., disagree. But, d'you know, there's still sides on every story. I'm part of Redfern but I'm not part of the Housing Company and I'm not part of the Tent Embassy, so I'd not make any comments on that. Hopefully they will work that out.

[Another Aboriginal woman in the audience replies]: But is it not wonderful Rose that we're now able to have various opinions and choices?

The discussion between 'Indigenous peoples' arose, as mentioned before, when plans to redevelop the area came to light with housing for the nearby University of Sydney students, a gymnasium, retail outlets and other commercial developments. These plans were directed by the Aboriginal people running the Aboriginal Housing Company, who claimed they were attempting to put Aboriginal housing on The Block but there was not funding from basically the times of Whitlam. Meanwhile, those in the Tent Embassy maintained that The Block was a sacred area and that the project should be instead about affordable houses which had to go to those families who were living there before and had been evicted as well as other Aboriginal people.

While these sorts of discussion were maintained in the mass media and by diverse people, I found in the postbox of my house a flyer from Urban Growth NSW, which celebrated the commercial development of the area. In order to get to know the situation better I went to The Block in Redfern. The first time, it was after the ceremony that Ray Jackson had directed for the Aboriginal Passport on the 13th of September 2014. Many media had been invited for the event, but I only could see the Aboriginal channel NITV there. When the ceremony was finished a woman took the floor to invite us to pass by the Tent Embassy to get to know what was happening there. Two Mexicans guys and I went to the Tent Embassy. In there we were welcomed by a group of women who were seated close to a fire, close to various tents and a sacred circle. We spent some hours there and had a conversation in which they explained their rejection of the AHC's project. A young girl who I presume is White-fella approached us, shouting from the top of the hill. She was criticising the media for not reporting what was happening in there. One of the women there, Aunty Marion tried to appease her: 'Sit down there, be quiet and listen. And we'll explain this to you later'. The following conversation was directed to distinguish between 'different kinds of media' in which some are considered better than others. The biggest criticism was towards the mass media, which they said did not offer their voices equally. Rather, minority media and the Aboriginal media were considered as those which were offering more the diversity of Aboriginal voices.

Another time I went there was during the NAIDOC week, on the 21st of February 2015, in which there were celebrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements, with a series of events. While Koori Radio staff were broadcasting these events around the city which were full of Aboriginal people, the Tent Embassy received the news that they would be evicted. When I arrived there I met Ray Jackson, who with other Aboriginal elders was supporting the Tent Embassy. The place had got full of other supporters, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and many journalists. While I was chatting with Ray one of the men who was with him was taking pictures of other people who had cameras in their hands and say to us: 'These media people, all these people here think they can come and just take bloody pictures of you without asking!!' The tumult of people was big, and

finally the Tent Embassy was not evicted. There were more attempts of evictions by a judicial process that continued after I left Australia. On the 26th of February 2015 I received the news from Raul Bassi, supporter of the Tent Embassy, saying that the federal Minister of Indigenous Affairs had intervened in this conflict resolving to provide \$5 billion of federal funds for affordable Aboriginal housing units which would be included in the project of the development of the area. However, as I could read in the news, a property agency was ‘celebrating’ and promoting through an advertisement that as ‘the Aboriginals have already moved out, now Redfern as the last virgin suburb close to city, it will have great potential for the capital growth in the near future’ (see in Pearlman 2014).

All this complex and long process of disagreements continued to be the focus of attention on Redfern. However, during the more than a year that I was living in Redfern there were several marches protesting which did not get much attention from dominant media. Some of them were directed by the ‘grandmothers’ of the Stolen Generations who affirmed there is still a very large percentage of Aboriginal children removed from their families which can lead to realising governments still act as in the past.<sup>31</sup> Other marches were celebrated to protest against the number of Aboriginal deaths in custody. The streets of the city were frequently full of signs on lampposts announcing them and inviting media to assist. Other signs announced concerts, night markets, documentary and film projections for the community and activities in the gym and other places of Redfern. Very frequently on my way to Koori Radio I used to see them on Redfern Street, the main street of Redfern. And when I arrived at the radio station I could hear some of the broadcasters announcing them.



Sign on lamppost announcing an event to talk about the deaths of Aboriginal people in custody. On the right bottom it reads: 'Media is especially welcomed'.

<sup>31</sup> Information can be found at <http://stopstolengenerations.com.au>

All these activities are telling us about the forms of cultural and political activity that remain in Redfern. As Bain Attwood asserts, Aboriginal people in Sydney found it difficult to authenticate their demands for land rights since the policies in the country had tended towards the traditionalism and continuity of Aboriginal practices defined by the dominant Australian discourses (Attwood 2003: 348; see also Povinelli 2002). However, Redfern and The Block had been ‘sacred’ places that have permitted the continuity of Aboriginal relationships inside a cosmopolitan urban context and have achieved management and some form of sovereignty. Redfern and The Block still continue as a reference and symbol for Aboriginal resistance and the place where the Aboriginal political identity has been articulated and re-articulated for decades through the work of organisations such as Koori Radio. Their works continue there, even though Redfern, after various moments of gentrification, is no longer the largest Aboriginal area in Sydney, which is now Western Sydney, the area to which some people from The Block were re-located. Yet the number of Aboriginal organisations and people that remain there are fostering the idea that this area continues as a symbol of Aboriginality in urban Sydney. A place also to which many people and institutions still look when establishing relationships with the Aboriginal community in Sydney.

## **Chapter Seven: Between governmentality and informality**

In the last chapter I have shown how from the 1970s there was an important political and cultural movement in this area that brought changes to Aboriginal lives and highlighted the importance of the Aboriginal organisations that emerged there. As well, I have explained the influence of mass media in the construction of ‘Aboriginal prototypes’ that link Redfern with ‘negative images’ and suggested some forms in which neoliberalism infiltrates Redfern through urban projects. I will now put in the centre of the analysis the state and its relation to Aboriginal organisations. In so doing I will follow some recent works that have analysed this changing historical relationship using the concepts of neoliberal and postcolonial governmentality. These authors (Morris 2013; Fisher 2012, 2013; Norman 2015; Babidge 2010) have highlighted how government techniques and bureaucratic apparatuses shape the behaviour and conduct of Aboriginal people. As well, how Aboriginal people and corporations are forming part of the forms of self-governing by which they have become responsible for governing and managing themselves. The most current forms of governmentality have successfully got into Aboriginal lives and organisations, in conjunction with neoliberal policies implemented by the state from 1980s that, as Barry Morris states (Morris 2013) look at the neoliberal model of Western industrialised societies. These works about the state explain how, since Aboriginal voices from the 70s have been insisting on self-determination and the need to be managed by themselves, governments have created and funded Aboriginal bodies run by Aboriginal representatives that foster the governing of the self and others (Aboriginal communities). With the creation of diverse local, regional and state Aboriginal commissions and other organisations, those who constitute them have been called on by the government to become responsible for their own concerns and rules. In the founding of Koori Radio, the ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission’ (ATSIC) was the representative Aboriginal body which directed Indigenous programs and funding. After the dismantling of ATSIC in 2005, other series of regional and state sub-organisations continued the government extension by their connection with state and national governmental departments about Indigenous affairs. However, my argument is that, in spite of these forms of government extension into Aboriginal lives, there is still room for resistance and some management in organisations like Koori Radio. Although I do not deny the existing governmental control —rather the opposite— and the participation of Aboriginal people in this self-control, I take from inputs of authors such as Daniel Fisher (Fisher 2013), Heidi Norman (Norman 2015) and Sally Babidge (Babidge 2010) a look at the ways that Koori Radio maintains formal relations with the state while managing its agenda. My argument is that Koori Radio, whilst complying with bureaucrats’ requirements and subjected to forms of governmentality through, for instance, government radio sponsors that aim to convince the audience to conform to standard Western conducts, maintains the objectives declared from its origin, supported by extensive informal engagements with volunteers at the radio and based on media self-representation and promotion of Aboriginal cultural forms articulated into a political identity.

As explained in chapter five, Michel Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' (Foucault, 1991) reveals the impact of the state on the lives of the population through a series of direct and indirect means by which population becomes an object of control and knowledge. By operating through the rationalities of people, government extends in a multidirectional manner: through the governing of a moral self, the governing of the family and political governing. Foucault called this governmentality as the 'art of government' with a disciplinary society extended into diverse spaces of the society such as schools and hospitals. The 'art of governing' comes from regulating these spaces to a social order and standard conducts with the aim to create sites of social and political domination and disciplined and docile bodies. In those sites where there is an atmosphere of close community, such as existed in Redfern from the 1970s, the government extension is exercised as a way to govern the self and the community. A radio station like Koori Radio, that is attempting to transmit Aboriginal voices and messages for the Aboriginal communities not only in Redfern but the rest of Sydney and environs, becomes a device for 'extending' the moral standard of the community through their broadcasts. In this chapter I will focus on the ways the 'art of governing' is extended via the radio through advertisements by government sponsors designed to be a remedy for the attributed 'bad behaviour' in the construction of 'Aboriginal prototypes'. This will also reveal the postcolonial paternalism that operates inside the 'art of governing' in these sponsors. Yet in chapter eight and nine I will show how Koori Radio keeps up their work to maintain its objectives in self-representation to further 'Aboriginal prototypes' and on cultural productions that express an identity of resistance to precisely those 'Aboriginal prototypes'.

### 1. Swearing after 10 p.m.

The day I first met Heather at the radio station we discussed my role during the fieldwork. We agreed I would be in charge of one of the tasks not covered by any worker: 'No-one wants to do this. I have a bunch of CDs on my desk and a full box. You could catalogue the music, check the background of the artists and put it on dalet'. Dalet is the software for cataloguing the music on the computers utilised for the broadcasts. Since my editing role in Las Radiantes was similar, this task seemed achievable to me. Heather proposed this task because it was useful for broadcasters to have more available music to play and because there was no-one at the radio who could work full-time on it. Before my arrival, the music editing work was split between Heather, Karl —the production coordinator— and broadcasters, who made the music edition when other job assignments permitted it. Heather also thought my new job could become a chore at times yet it would be useful for my research. At first glance I did not find it a chore, or especially relevant for the research, since I thought I would work all the time by myself in a desk at the office —which as I will further show did not happen. As the months passed I ascertained it could be tedious and significantly offered clues to unmask governmentality effects on the radio policies and Aboriginal behaviour. The music editing permitted me to see some forms of controlled behaviour embodied in the radio policies, for instance that it did not allow music which contained swearing to be played until 10 p.m. Although this policy is shared by other non-Aboriginal



radio stations, it opens an important discussion here in relation to Black identity. This swearing prohibition is related to forms of self-governing embedded in the radio policies that has become a way to 'be in the own game of the Whitefellas'. Yet importantly, the point that I want to make here is that it has also become a limitation or 'censure' of some musical expressions of the transnational Black identity which often contain swearing, such as hip-hop; a musical style that so importantly constitutes a powerful expression of Black identity and resistance in the U.S., and has a powerful influence in other parts of the world such as Australia.

From my initial ignorance of Australia history and my own background, I found excessive the apologies from some of my Aboriginal informants and other Australians when swearing or sneezing. People routinely apologised with an 'excuse me' after they sneezed or said 'sorry' when using swearing. In my mind, they are just natural body reactions with no need to be 'forbidden'. Yet observing this 'naturalised behaviour' I learnt to keep swearing to my own language. During my first month at the radio station the self-control of swearing became paradoxical since some of the Aboriginal radio staff and I were 'conscious' of each others impressions and of 'controlling' our expressions. We both were managing the 'selves' we presented as first impressions following 'normalised behaviour' of non-swearing. We both were 'expecting' the 'other reaction' if we did. Yet in moments of much stress at the station swearing 'appeared' in some of them who rapidly directed an apology towards me. Since I just did not react either to those apologies or to the forms of swearing, those who used swearing started to behave in a less self-controlled way. Other people at the radio did not repress themselves in my presence nor when having new non-Aboriginal people at the station. Emma, one of the broadcasters on an early evening came to the office where Heather, two new European volunteers and I were. We were working at the office when she just arrived at the radio before her show. After greeting us she started to narrate a personal story to Heather by using a considerable amount of swearing. All of us were laughing at Emma's story yet Heather started to be visibly concerned about her 'bad behaviour'. So she sweetly reprimanded her: 'We have guests!!!' We all continued laughing with emphasis. Then Emma looked at the two new volunteers and replied: 'This is the Black style; the real Black-fella style!!' No-one of the volunteers made a comment yet Heather added: 'I hope none of you have any problem with swearing!!'

Another day at the radio Heather and Alicia were chatting about this use of swearing. Heather commented to Alicia that original Aboriginal languages had no words to swear with, which was also argued by Alicia as true of the Fijian language. They both attributed the influence of the English language to the extended use of swearing in Indigenous peoples. English being the dominant language used in the radio station, I will focus here on the importance of swearing in English in Aboriginal lives and the modes of governmental correction. The anthropologist Marcia Langton (1998) has analysed the use of swearing and its consequences for Aboriginal people. She has explained this use on the part of Aboriginal people as being operative procedures to resolve conflicts by a shared experience.

Langton understands it to be the result of meaningful ritualised codes inside ‘the new political, legal and social situations imposed by the dominant Australian regime’ (Langton 1988: 202). She examines relations with police in a context in which Aboriginal people have the highest recorded imprisonment rate in the world. As well, she points out that studies have not explored the ways in which ‘racism, cultural misunderstanding and other factors operate to cause the highest recorded imprisonment rate in the world’ (1988:201). Instead, she states, studies have focused on the ‘vicious circle of poverty’ and ‘high tolerance to deviancy’ as the most commonly proposed causes for this high imprisonment rate. Langton —supported by Gaynor MacDonald’s work on the symbolism of fights between Aboriginal people (McDonald 1988)— states that practices such as swearing and fighting are ritualised codes derived from traditional Aboriginal cultural patterns, that are reproduced in contemporary Aboriginal society for dispute processing and social ordering. She explains that when Aboriginal people are approached, spoken to or touched by police, they use swearing as forms of insult and declarations of offence and accusation. Then the police reaction has usually been to arrest them for ‘unseemly words’, ‘assault’ and other charges under various acts (1988:212). Those acts that Langton refers to are laws existing in some states such as New South Wales. The ‘Offences Act 1988 s4’ in New South Wales states that offensive language shall not be used within hearing distance of a public place or a school, otherwise a fine applies. Practically all Aboriginal people I talked with, strongly argued that in cases of swearing and others such as the consumption of alcohol in public spaces, this act was applied far more to Aboriginal people than White Australians. Nonetheless, I will focus here on the effect that these governmental apparatuses —that have been banning and punishing Aboriginal people— have on the radio policies that did not permit songs that had swearing in them to be played before 10 p.m. as a form of ‘self or community control’. Furthermore, this in turn will permit us to see how this control limits the expression of some forms of Black music.

While we have seen that Emma claimed that swearing was ‘the real Black-fella style’, others argued this was not the ‘Aboriginal-style’. On the part of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the radio, there was the belief that some forms of swearing associated with transnational Blackness expressions such as Black hip-hop from the U.S. had nothing to do with Aboriginal people. I chatted for a long time with Sarah about the swearing policy of ‘after 10 p.m.’. My question about why they apply that policy seemed strange as its reasons were obvious to her:

Well, we all know that we like to swear. But if you look at it, it is one of the stereotypes about Black fellas. Personally it was very clear at the beginning that it had to be a policy. Remember: this is the time when ATSIC was around, and ATSIC gave Gadigal [Koori Radio] a lot of funding as well, from mob pockets they could get. And a lot of the management was alive with, in with people who were working on administration and education. So a big thing about to be educated is that you don’t have to swear to get your way! If you wanna really play the same terms that White fellas be in their own game. Be intellectual about it. And all that nigger and motherfucker stuff,.. that’s not our way! We don’t swear about our mothers or aunties like that! And we don’t expect our children to expect that stuff as well.

It's very respectful, d'you know? No people wants to hear that. That's my opinion. I thought it was deadly! I was never raised in a house like that, to use that kind of words. I think it's about educating White fellas out there, that we can be successful, that we can run a radio station. And if you are gonna be stereotyping us,... If you are gonna say all we do is drink, d'you know, bloody swear or whatever, we've proved that we've got content that everybody can enjoy. And you can learn about it at the same time. So it's about breaking down those stereotypes and barriers.

Whereas there were diverse opinions and practices in the radio in relation to the expression of swearing, the reality is that it became a policy inside the radio station from its beginning and a rule that everybody had to follow during the broadcasts. I will further extend the justification that Sarah alludes to in relation to 'being educated' and funded by ATSIC in Koori Radio origins, while I will focus here on the difficulty of making 'playing the White game' compatible with promoting Black music and some transnational expressions of Blackness in relation to swearing; more specifically in hip-hop music.

The 'simple task' of editing the music which initially seemed easy to me became more complex when I assumed 'responsibility' for checking the swearing. I had to catalogue those songs which included swearing as 'Explicit' so that any broadcaster would not use them before 10 p.m. Very occasionally we received the music in the form of radio-edited, which means the swearing was hidden and it could be played before 10 p.m. Between all the songs that I edited in my time there, the majority that had swearing belonged to hip-hop music. Thus, this task could become a nuisance, especially when broadcasters were waiting for a new album to come out. This was the case when we received the first album of Mau Power. Broadcasters were eager to play 'the first recorded album of a hip-hop Torres Strait Islander artist!' The Grandfather said to me: 'Mau told me he'd send it to me some months ago! He wants me to play it!' I quickly started to work on this CD so that it would be available for the Grandfather and other broadcasters and put some songs on dalet as 'Explicit'. Yet in my hurry to rapidly edit it I did not notice the word 'fuck' in one of them and I did not mark it as 'Explicit'. When I arrived the next day one of the morning broadcasters was upset because she had played it on her morning show: 'I just played it and when I heard that 'fuck' word I was like, oh my god! And I had to quickly stop the song and put another one'. Thus, I was corrected of my mistake and reminded of the policy. While this broadcaster got very upset about my mistake, other broadcasters complained that they could not play songs on their shows that 'were great because of the swearing thing'.

The Grandfather ran a show in the evening that exclusively played Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop music and another one of 'Black music'. He showed me a trick to hide the swearing words on the editing software: 'When I get some time I do it. Then I have more songs to play in my show!', he told me. So after a few months working there I started to hide some swearing, although neither the broadcasters nor I could spend much time on this task, since the computer that had the

software to do it was very demanded by all of us. In the process of ‘swearing checking’ I found myself confused about which words were included or not. Then I resorted asking the staff for determining which were ‘hard words’. ‘Fuck’ was doubtful for some of them. Other words such as ‘motherfucker’ were unquestionably swear words and seemed more an influence from African hip-hop artists from the U.S. When Sarah said ‘we don’t swear about our mothers and aunties like that!’ she was giving me clues to understand how subjectivities on Blackness are differently projected in the transnational Black identity individually and in diverse geographical areas. The ‘Black Power’ movement in the U.S. was directed to make the ‘Black thing’ something good and took from some racist concepts such as ‘black’ or ‘nigger’ to use as counter-hegemonic forms of expression to invert their meaning. Through music these words have reached other parts of the planet such as Australia and influenced the Black Power movement. So the interest here is to see how this transnationalisation has been subjectively understood. Daniel Fisher has analysed this phenomenon providing ethnographic data that suggests that similar concerns are reproduced in other Aboriginal communities in Australia (Fisher 2010, 2016; Bessire & Fisher 2012). As he says, the powerfully attractive sounds that came from the U.S., South Africa and the Caribbean in the 1960-70s sounded strong to the activists in Redfern and other parts of Australia. Today this is still seen by some Aboriginal people as powerful, yet there are different voices and opinions about its reproduction in Aboriginal music. While some music genres such as hip-hop and R&B have served to perform Blackness as a positive value against racial vilification, some Aboriginal people in Australia consider that such music ‘participates in the racialization of Aboriginal people’ (Fisher 2016:19). However, as he adds, some young Aboriginal men adopt patterns of speech from the Afro descendent U.S. hip-hop music, which explains why transnational Black identity is at times conflicting and at others complementary (2016:131-132).

The opinions of the Koori Radio staff were also diverse: some, like Sarah, considered that it was unnecessary to listen to words that ‘were not the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander style’; others, did not give to their performances so much importance but were ‘resigned’ to omit them from their shows. Let’s remember here that Koori Radio broadcast Black music from diverse countries, not only Australia, and that the hip-hop music that contained swearing had to be played when their shows were ended: after 10 p.m. I believe that this situation is telling us about the diverse subjectivities of a transnational identity and the conflictive views that it can produce as Fisher states. Yet it is not just for the diverse Aboriginal opinions, but for the banning, reprisal and ‘censorship’ that surrounds these elements of the transnational Blackness —that significantly have become musical forms of resistance — and have to be discarded since they are considered inappropriate in the Australian context of swearing control.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Sarah has provided information that is relevant in this sense, which is that the expression of such words that have acquired an international powerful reference, are the same elements of public behaviours by which Aboriginal people have been stereotyped and, as Langton explained, banished from the public sphere. So that, we can see here that only those elements of the

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<sup>32</sup> See the discussion on George Stavrias about how Australian media associate hip-hop with ‘crime and moral bankruptcy’ (Stavrias 2005: 44).

transnational Black identity that are not considered ‘inappropriate’ for the Australian context can be performed on the radio station. Such that, to erase hard words before 10 p.m. has become a way ‘to be in the own game of the White fellas’ as an effect of the governmental extension into radio policies, yet also a way to limit or ‘censure’ some forms of Black expression. This control was reflected also in the behaviour of some radio staff inside the offices, as I showed at the beginning. To better comprehend the effect that the dominance of White or Westernised policies have inside the radio station, I will provide more ethnographic data that suggest that in order to avoid punishment, the radio looks at ‘White behaviour’ as an ‘example’.

As I frequently had doubts about other contents which because of my cultural background were more explicit than swearing I asked for some advice from Heather; to which she answered: ‘Anytime that you see something that you think might be controversial ask any of us’. The complexity here was that the importance Heather gave to swearing was not that important for me, whereas other topics she did not consider explicit were more subject to controlled behaviour because of my own Catholic cultural influence. Thus, one day in which I was working on a song which had sexual content I asked Heather:

Ángeles: I don’t know if this song should go after 10 p.m. It has a lot of reference to sexual content.

Heather: Why? Does it have any swearing?

Ángeles: No, but it’s talking about sex, sex, sex, all the time.

Heather kept thinking for a while about what I said. She initially did not find any reason to avoid this song before 10 p.m. but considered my words. Then Heather resolved the problem by arguing:

I’m thinking that White-radios do put sexual content before 10 p.m. so I don’t find any reason why we shouldn’t.

This instance exemplifies the effect of ‘White’ or ‘Westernised’ values in the art of governing and the postcoloniality of this dominance. Heather’s words are expressing the subjectivity by which she looks at White-radios in order to follow an example or a model. At the outset I mentioned the work of Barry Morris. As Morris argues government agencies that have been created to extend the government, operate to constitute particular forms of subjectivity through many institutional sites of ‘governmentality’ that subtly permeate dominant cultural practices (Morris 2012: 22-23). Heather’s words exemplify subjectivity constructions in order to follow ‘White models’. In Aboriginal Australian history, this government extension have been applied in different ways. In diverse works Barry Morris has analysed the political switch in governmental policies and their governmentality effect during the twentieth century. In previous times, forms of biological racism rendered Aboriginal people irredeemable and doomed to extinction. Yet from the twentieth century this biological essentialism was replaced by the view that they were socially and culturally deficient products of their environment. Then, policies of assimilation were developed in Aboriginal reserves and through the removal of many children to institutional environments to transform or retrain their identity and

subjectivity (Morris 2013:15). The aim this time was to transform their beliefs, morals, values and behaviours to conform them to norms of mainstream society. This state intervention consisted of policies towards the management of people to be dealt with under 'native affairs'. Thus, there was a switch in the mentality from 'biological inferiority' to 'cultural inferiority'. By what post-colonial governments termed 'a preparation for citizenship' Aboriginal people were educated to admit and learn dominant society values as superior through the mechanism of discipline and different systems of education (see Morris 1988). Through what has been termed 'an administrative inquisition' (Morris, 1988: 33) the dominant society has been inculcating belief in the superiority of White values and assimilating Aboriginal people into the disciplined social and economic life settled by the hegemonic society (1988: 34).

The activism that happened in places like Redfern from the 1970s that I have been describing and their claims of self-determination and land rights were followed by the emergence of a landscape of Aboriginal organisations. Aboriginal people became partly responsible for governing and managing themselves through the development of these Aboriginal organisations and the incorporation of Aboriginal people into bureaucratic structures that offered avenues of social mobility (Morris 2013:42). As Barry Morris explains, from the 1980s there was a shift in the state politics towards neoliberalism which involved new state interventions to direct subjectivities towards the market, providing programs that facilitate individual 'self-actualisation' based on Western industrialised values (Morris 2013:6). This switch was also occurring in Western Europe and the U.S. based on neoliberal economics and conservative thought in Anglo-American countries that became the new political and economic orthodoxy. The forms of neoliberalism were first evidenced in Australia in 1988 through the New South Wales government, which denied the importance of struggles from previous years and sought egalitarianism reflecting the idea that all citizens have the same moral status and moral worth (ibid.) Yet the 'new' form of maintaining the 'art of governing' was through policies, practices and socio-cultural ordering of state institutions. Hence, all aspects of social behaviour become reconceptualised along economic lines and the extended idea that the free capitalist market is the only means by which humans can advance. As a result, government control was made in a top-down manner, incorporating Aboriginal representations as the ATSIC, which was the body providing funding to Koori Radio in its beginning and the one in 'charge' of transmitting dominant values such as that of the prohibition of swearing before 10 p.m. In turn, Koori Radio has included into its policies forms of control behaviour that are shared by some of its members such as Sarah, but not by others.

As we see, all these policies come by the hands of the dominant White society which is the one that establishes the order and conducts Aboriginal subjectivities and behaviours towards dominant moral acts, having the effect on Heather that she had to look at the behaviour of 'White radios' in order to avoid punishment. Significantly, this needs to look at regulations and 'White' examples limits or makes incompatible some forms of expressing the transnational Black identity. This tendency is not new to Australia. Elizabeth Povinelli, in her study about land claims in the Northwest coast of

Australia, showed that government demands for traditional customs as the basis for a successful native title claim, requires that their practices and customs must be free ‘of any sense of a repugnance that would “shatter the skeletal structure” of state law’ (Povinelli 2002: 12 ). Or in other words, in order to achieve land claims, Aboriginal people not only must show ‘traditional’ practices that ‘prove’ continuity, but also these cannot show any features that go against the statutory law and the public sense of moral decency. Alike, features of the transnational Black identity that use racist terms that were used against Black people and other hard words in a counter-hegemonic manner, go against Australian acts and the public sense of moral decency and behaviour. The extension of the government into the radio policies thus limits their exposition to a reduced time slot (night time) in which the majority of the radio shows are over and the radio usually just plays music.

It can be argued that Aboriginal people are not the only ones who are subjected to this form of governing, since the art of governing applies to the whole society. However, Aboriginal history tells us about the colonial legacy represented by the existing paternalism of Aboriginal policies that, as I aim to extend in the next points, come to be seen as a remedy for the attributed ‘bad behaviour’ on the side of Aboriginal people, responding to the ‘Aboriginal prototypes’ I referred to in the last chapter.

## 2. Suspected of misbehaviour

The other day somebody thought that I wanted to steal his car. And I told him: Don’t worry about me, mate. I don’t need to steal your car. I can get one for free from the government.

The above lines correspond to a performance of members of the Black Comedy show, an Aboriginal TV show. They were performing in the same Aboriginal event in which Aunty Rose was giving a talk about the history of Redfern, that was broadcast by Koori Radio. In this performance, the Black Comedy member was joking about the Aboriginal prototype behaving in a ‘criminal manner’ and the one that attributes Aboriginal people as recipients on government funding. Similar to this, Aunty Rose also expressed some words that pointed in the same direction, by affirming that contrary to the extended opinion in Australia about Aboriginal people receiving all kinds of government support, she had never got any house from the government: ‘I must have been in the wrong line’, she added. On this point I will introduce literature which discusses the creation of specific Indigenous programs, extended images of misuse of funding and its effect on Aboriginal organisations such as Koori Radio. Further, I will show how in spite of a whole series of propaganda in relation to Aboriginal people receiving financial support, the radio has to appeal to a volunteer program for its operation.

The pejorative icon of Aboriginal criminality overlaps in the instance above with the idea of governments as saviours and institutional funding as a panacea for ‘Aboriginal problems’. Propaganda about Indigenous programs attracts attention from media and political debates. As well, various

authors have discussed the use of state funding and its effect on Aboriginal lives through the series of Aboriginal bodies that were created such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). ATSIC was founded in 1990 during the Bob Hawke Labor government, formed of Aboriginal representatives from various parts of Australia whose objective was the oversight and political representation of Aboriginal people. Bodies like this made Aboriginal people compelled into being participants in the forms of ‘educating’ Aboriginal people towards their incorporation into the standard rules and conducts as accepted segments of the society. However, this involved, as Heidi Norman argues, that certain modes of behaviour —such as informalities, joking, sharing of resources, reciprocity, ignoring punctuality and time constraints— which were not specially problematic in social Aboriginal spheres, had to be made to change over several years towards dominant behaviours and subjectivities (Norman 2015:185). Further, this involved a series of government controls in the form of audits and annual reports that investigated the correct conduct of Aboriginal bodies. ATSIC and other bodies worked for more than a decade, complying with the requirements of the governments. Yet in 2003 ATSIC was investigated and reported as being ineffective in connecting well with Aboriginal people. As Heidi Norman explains, a series of bad press was conjoined with a national narrative that included the abolition of ATSIC, in a publicly reported swell of sexual violence, predation, pecuniary interests, and corruption allegations and charges (2015:198). Thus, in 2005 ATSIC was abolished and a new political tendency of reform commenced with the entrenchment of administrative power, creating a bureaucracy with control and oversights.

The myth about Aboriginal corporations making bad use of funding extended also to other Aboriginal organisations. There is the assumption that an Aboriginal organisation which ‘receives or manages resources on behalf of its clientele is making some sort of ‘representation’ of that clientele’ (Rowse 2006: 175; see also Redmond 2006). Aboriginal bodies and by extension, Aboriginal organisations, are seen as suspected of forms of misbehaviour, misconduct and inappropriate use of funding sources and in need of further control. When Aboriginal corporations appeared on the scene intermediating between the community and institutions, the responsibility was embodied on those organisations. As the work of Daniel Fisher shows, media associations are also placed between community councils, regional development corporations and other institutions of Aboriginal governance which act as intermediaries (Fisher 2013: 267). As an effect of the extended image of misuse of funding by Aboriginal bodies, they are subjected to extremes of fiscal oversight under the supposition that Aboriginal close ties make them more susceptible to nepotism and misappropriation of funds (Rowse 2006:173) Thus, under the logic of these myths, institutional intervention unfortunately appears axiomatic and indispensable, and it is executed in three directions:

1. Aboriginal autonomy and management is supervised by non-Aboriginal institutions.
2. Power is not transferred to organisations; rather it is applied indirectly through forms of governmentality.
3. If Aboriginal persons, as individuals and organised bodies “fail” using funding — i.e. their behaviour is seen as not ‘civilised’— extra supervision is needed.



Responsibility is on those organisations which get funding; i.e.: they are responsible for its good use, for representing a community and for not showing themselves unable to solve the ‘community problems’. In addition, in the case of organisations settled in Redfern, as the work of Katherine Lambert-Pennington shows, they have got an extra reputation for getting the most funding for Indigenous programs than any other Aboriginal communities in Sydney (Lambert-Pennington 2012: 140). As the work of Paul Monaghan has shown, there is strong competition for grants for Aboriginal organisations to be incorporated in order to aspire to funding (Monagah 2012: 53). So that those granted have an obligation towards not only the state, but to the rest of the Aboriginal community who might also want to assume that role. Responsibility in Aboriginal organisations comes differently marked by diverse governmental apparatuses and the obligations to ‘look after’ the Aboriginal communities necessities. As Sally Babidge signals, the central idea of the Aboriginal corporations is that their members and other spokespersons are seen as able to represent ‘community interests’. Hence, national and local expectations to represent a certain kind of Aboriginal identity and to provide welfare services, put them under ‘immense administrative and personal pressure’ (Babidge 2010: 158). As Daniel Fisher states, such forms of responsibility that are so characteristic of neoliberal discourse, policy and ideology, are not seen as a key precondition for forms of neoliberal governmentality. Nevertheless, responsibility and obligations within the Aboriginal community and for their own conduct, are key in the day to day practices of Aboriginal organisations (Fisher 2016:186). In turn, this has an effect that is outstanding here: the state, as Tim Rowse explains, is exempt from being considered to have failed on changing statistics, whereas Aboriginal organisations appear to be the ones responsible if they fail ‘in their incapacity to solve their own problems or the community problems’ (Rowse 2006:179). Further this generalisation has allowed to the creation of a myth which carries the stigma of Aboriginal people ‘as unable to solve their problems even with all the money that the government gives them’. If Aboriginal organisations cannot prove to be able to deal with ‘White’ material such as monetary resources they have proved to be ‘inferior’ and hence unable to comply with the established order of citizenship.

Monetary resources are applied in Australia in the form of specialised Indigenous programs, which in part come to be a ‘substitute for those given to the rest of the community’ (Burgman 2003:44). They do not differ much from those the wider society receives through other apparatuses. Rowse analyses this specialisation as a result of government assimilation and wonders what is the necessity to count Aboriginal people as if they were apart from the wider society, the very one into which they are expected to be assimilated (Rowse 2006:177). During the Liberal John Howard government (1996-2007), Rowse states, the dominant discourse that establishes ‘no government can help a community that is not committed to help itself’ was born (2006: 179); i.e. a community which is not inclined to ‘fall into’ governmental guidelines. As I aim to show in the next point, this discourse remains in the present in the form of cuts to specialised Indigenous programs.

### 3. Filling gaps with volunteers

While the radio station is subjected to government control and there exists a series of myths around Aboriginal misuse of funding and a whole propaganda about Indigenous budgets, Koori Radio must appeal to a volunteer program in order to fill the gaps to run as a radio station. This volunteer program, we are going to see, permits the radio operation to continue, and as well, to operate outside governmental control. In other words, informal engagement occur in the radio through a volunteer program; since it works outside the funding sphere, it permits an informal relationship with people who at their will approach and engage in diverse activities; and importantly, fill gaps that are not covered by any form of funding.

During 2014 and under the Abbott conservative federal government, Australian community radios have been at risk of having their funding cut, which until this writing has not been executed yet. Debates about community radio funding and cuts in Indigenous programs in general have occurred in the media and conversations, followed by a campaign of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia against proposals by the Australian Commission of Audit to cut funding.<sup>33</sup> During an event organised at Macquarie University for Aboriginal people in the north of Sydney, I witnessed a debate between the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in NSW with about fifty people in the university auditorium. People were throwing questions at him in relation to different Aboriginal concerns. The peak of the discussion was an argument with a woman who accused him of making cuts to the Aboriginal budget. He justified it by saying that during the past governments much money was invested but little was well directed and effective. She agreed with him that money did not resolve problems yet insisted on arguing ‘many people are losing their jobs’ to which he made no reply. The conversations ended at that point.

Koori Radio was broadcasting this event. There were Karl —the production coordinator— Greg, who was interviewing people around and Emma, broadcasting from the Koori Radio van used for outside broadcasting. Koori Radio staff did not witness the debate of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. When the debated ended, the Minister went to the radio van for an interview. During the interview, he affirmed his empathy with Aboriginal people due to his Italian background and his willingness to run projects which will preserve and register their languages. I then asked Greg if there had ever been a Minister of Aboriginal Affairs who was Aboriginal, to which he responded with irony: ‘Of course not! We need White-people to tell us what to do!!’ No Aboriginal person has ever been appointed Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, either in the federal or NSW governments. Instead a series of Aboriginal corporations have come to act — in a Foucauldian sense— as mediators in the relationship with the

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<sup>33</sup> The National Commission of Audit is an independent body to review and report on the performance, functions and roles of the Commonwealth Australian government. See Aboriginal voices against cuts on the National Indigenous Radio Service <http://www.nirs.org.au/NEWS/Community-broadcasters-campaign-against-cuts>

state in a controlled manner, significantly linked through Indigenous program. Yet the irony of Greg's words are expressing his dissent with this control or supervision on the part of the dominant society. In other words, while forms of governmentality have reached into Aboriginal society and organisations through their incorporation that permits them to apply for funding, Greg's words express resistance to the 'White supervision' that corrects their behaviour from a paternalistic point of view.

The above example permits introducing a debate in relation to state supervision and support and the shortcomings not covered by institutional bodies. While the radio station is subjected to government control and while a series of myths exists around Aboriginal misuse of funding and a whole propaganda about Indigenous budgets, the structure of the radio shows another reality. Part of the staff at Koori Radio are employees, however, to cover all the hours of programs, to organise events such as the Yabun Festival and to cover outside broadcasting, the radio uses an extensive volunteer program. This volunteer program has been running in the radio from its origins before getting a broadcasting licence and it is still maintained today. While it has attracted many people from overseas interested in projecting their voices and participating in the articulation of a political identity of resistance, it has also attracted White-fellas from Australia and other parts. Although White-fellas have not participated in the articulation of an identity that is so subjectively built through the experiences of peoples who have been labeled as Black and/or Indigenous, their engagement has been significant to reinforce the radio struggles. At the start of Koori Radio, there was participation by White Australian students and activists who formed part of the emergent reconciliation atmosphere in Australia. The work of Clare Land, which focuses on the many groups and organizations which have engaged with Indigenous struggles, offers interesting data in relation to these engagements happening in Redfern. She explains that politically and socially progressive or Christian organisations have been dominant. In Redfern and other parts of NSW, the New South Wales Builders Labourers Federation was the most significant supporter, being closely involved with the Black movement from the late 1960s onwards (Land 2015:64). Yet as well, others such as the Communist Party and university students became very important for Indigenous struggles, with campaigns of a distinctive character.

Nowadays, Whitefellas from different backgrounds participate in the radio and they are often university students or individuals who make the approach. These engagements are significant for two reasons. Firstly, because it permits some Whitefellas to meet — in many cases for first time— with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people; and secondly, because joining to other volunteers — Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other people from overseas—they maintain the station operation. The manner in which these volunteers participate in the radio is differently distributed. Before 6 p.m., the space is reserved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Following the radio objective to provide room for Black and Indigenous voices and promote their creative works, volunteers who are Black and Indigenous —including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders— people run the programs after 6 p.m. Whitefellas participate as partners of one of the broadcasters at their shows or in the offices organising activities. Thus, Koori Radio maintains a stepped division that gives

prominence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, followed by Black and Indigenous voices and the participation of Whitefellas with all of them. However, all the volunteers are limited in time so they can only participate in the free time that their jobs allow.

The radio station also runs a program through which Aboriginal youths are trained into radio work. The aim is to give them some foundation which can be used in the future for fomenting the idea of working *in* and *for* the community, with the aim of increasing also Aboriginal media. However, this seems insufficient in Heather's opinion, to be able 'to cover all the political issues happening out there':

I wanna see community radios like Koori Radio resourced properly; d'you know? When the resources come this way, because it has so much great potential, to be an employer of our own mob and keep our mob rather than being a training round and send them out to some where else, because they got better money and they got better resources. Because we need to keep our people as well.

This was the general opinion of Koori Radio staff. They did not manage to have enough staff to cover 'all the political issues happening out there'. In addition, Koori Radio had developed different strategies to put the radio outside the station and Redfern, to broadcast diverse activities happening in the city. For this, Koori Radio acquired a van. The income to pay that van came from a trivia night in which some Aboriginal celebrities participated. Meanwhile, on Koori Radio's website it is possible to see the name of the federal, state, local, non-government and corporations which have at some point contributed to support them. Yet it is also possible to see that this support has been decreasing from mid 2013. While the Koori Radio transmitter reaches 50k W in surrounding areas of Sydney, they reach other areas of Australia and the world through the digital space with broadcast signal KR00 (double zero for digital) and KR00.com.au. At the time of this writing the latter is not being funded yet and Koori Radio only manages to auto-support its digitalisation as a great challenge.

While part of the gaps can be filled with volunteer participation, there are other non-funded necessities that are not covered by any funding and need to be solved. Here, the neoliberal orthodoxy offers the chance for organisations to employ market practices that can permit continuity. In this sense, the radio offers air space for sponsorship for both government and non-government organisations to advertise themselves on air. During my time at the radio station, the majority of them came from government institutions. An analysis of these sponsors' ads will help to dismantle other forms of government extension through the radio broadcastings. It will also allow an explanation of its effect on the organisation of the radio activities. Further, it will show the postcolonial and paternalistic character that these advertisements have to correct behaviours through 'good models' examples embodied in Aboriginal persons.

#### 4. Advertising ‘good models’

There were other topics which were also prohibited during the music broadcasting at any time at the radio station: those which allude to drug and alcohol consumption were banned; only songs which talked about rehabilitation could be played. I found out about this policy also through the editing of music. One day Heather told me to delete a song that I had edited that made allusion to ‘hashish consumption’: ‘Only if it’s talking about rehabilitation can we play it’, she told me. This is another example of the governmental control whose restrictions are in turn evidence of the desire of the radio staff to erase damaging pictures of Aboriginal people prototypically represented as ‘alcoholics’ or ‘drug addicts’. As I aim to show, this responds to what Barry Morris sees as an effect of the ‘politics of the body’ in Australia, by which there is a particular relationship with visual and mediated discourse that has presented Aboriginal people as ‘behaving badly’ (Morris 2013:162). In turn, it is well reinforced by a form of informal education which can be as much institutionalised as formal education. The institutionalised informal education comes to the radio from the hands of sponsors and advertisements. The sort of advertisements played at Koori Radio mostly are sponsored by government apparatuses; predominantly Health NSW and City Council. One of these ads which was more frequently played during my time at Koori Radio was performed by an Aboriginal actress and singer. In it, she used her Aboriginal accent and referred to her mum who had a stroke and wanted to give it up smoking to avoid her ‘kids to grow up believing smoking is good’. Other ads referred to drinking and driving. Yet specially this smoking ad was predominant. As a smoker I have been encouraged by some of my informants to quit. Although hearing ads that mention strokes the whole time on the radio was not very encouraging, I never quit. In fact, I used to tell them that to hear all those adverts mentioning the word ‘smoking’ made me want to have a cigarette! Those in the radio who had quit it before especially insisted how healthy it would be for me to quit. Yet others did not make any comment.

I argue that the use of Aboriginal persons and linguistic Aboriginal forms in the adverts searches for a major impact on the community by relating ‘good models’ with ‘Aboriginal models’, which by extension also helps to erase the damaged image of Aboriginal prototypes.<sup>34</sup> Yet also, importantly, I argue that the replay of these corrective adverts reinforces the idea that Aboriginal people ‘behave badly’ and need to be corrected. What is evinced here is a way to surreptitiously place a dominant model on a persona by having her correct her own behaviour. The persona here is represented as an individual able to direct the community into ‘the right way’. The sponsors’ adverts take the form of corrections that are fostered from a paternalistic view which tries to alter Aboriginality and in addition typecasts them. Koori Radio, as ‘the Aboriginal radio station in Sydney’ can be seen from ‘outside’ as

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<sup>34</sup> See the work of Melinda Hinkson for another case of an Aboriginal radio station which becomes a carrier of government discourses through government advertisement played on air. Hinkson also points to this radio staff concern about the politics of representation in which negative stereotypes about Aboriginal people are increasingly dominant (Hinkson 2012).

representative of ‘the Aboriginal community’, being subjected to public valuation, ‘taking’ the — desired or not— responsibility to publicly embody a community. Yet it is also a device that can reach inner Aboriginal communities through listeners in Redfern, La Perouse, Parramatta, Blacktown and other areas. This radio station is facing the ‘responsibility’ of providing room for Aboriginal communities to express themselves while it is also ‘responsibly’ sending ‘educative messages’ to the community through sponsors that permit its continuity as a radio station. These sponsors are funded in the majority by governmental bodies. In this situation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the radio are dealing not solely with forms of sovereignty and discipline, but also with the development of a whole complex of saviours (Foucault 1991:103). As I aim to show, these kinds of saviour and paternalistic actions have come to be the axis of the sponsors’ advertisements which aim to direct Aboriginal people’s behaviour in order to, as Gillian Cowlshaw signals, ‘reform them’ (Cowlshaw 2003: 216), and hence to ‘save them from themselves’.

Alcohol and tobacco have been represented as goods brought by colonizers which Aboriginal people have been unable to cope with or use in a ‘civilised manner’. There are paintings in museums in Sydney from the era of colonisation in which Aboriginal people appear represented with bottles in their hands and passing out on the ground while non-Aboriginal people stand without an alcohol signal. One of the first Aboriginal persons who has been seen as one of the first ‘evidences’ of the prototype of the ‘drunken Aboriginal’ is Bennelong, a Wangal man of the Eora nation in Sydney who acted as intermediary between British and Aboriginal people. The film and television director Rachel Perkins —an Arrernte woman, daughter of the activist Charles Perkins— has made a film about the life of Bennelong and his relationship with the English after their first arrival to Australia, in Sydney. The film shows he was kidnapped by governor Phillip to be an interpreter between the Aboriginal clans and the English government. He was one of the Aboriginal survivors of the smallpox epidemic that was brought by White people and was seen as an experiment by colonisers to ‘enculturate a savage’. He lived sometimes in the governors house and also was taken to England to be shown as evidence of the Australian Aboriginal people. When he left Australia, Aboriginal people were living around government house, yet when he went back things had changed. He could not claim his position of authority inside his clan and another Aboriginal man had taken his wife. Aboriginal people were living now on the streets, drinking rum. In this Perkins’ film, Marcia Langton argues that rum was used from the earliest times of colonisation to lull the convicts that arrived in the English fleets. Yet, she states, that this rum was used as ‘an enticement with Aboriginal people to addict them to the effects of alcohol and to gain some control over them’ (Perkins & Cole 2008). Bennelong, driven to the limits of endurance by the confusion, disappointments and his position in two cultures, took also to drink in fury. One of the myths about his figure says that he got caught between two worlds and died as a lonely alcoholic, while in this film it is argued that he returned to his tribal life before dying.

Whereas from Bennelong times the ‘drunken Aborigine’ image started to be drawn on paintings, on various occasions in Aboriginal history the ‘drunken Aborigine’ and body images have been in

dominant discourses and media coverage in objectified form. Barry Morris explains how media representations of a drunken and violent Aboriginal people in riots and clashes with the police, reposition ‘the primacy of issues of law and order’ having an effect on Aboriginal policies (2013:24). He positions the objectification of the body as crucial for understanding politics directions. The image of riots and confrontations with the police present a violent disposition that is transformed in the media sensationalist press from an isolated act or an aggrieved response to become a depiction of their extended ‘bad behaviour’. Here, as Morris argues, there are two elements operating in conjunction: racism and paternalism, since paternalism works as the benign face of racism to legitimate settler colonial dispossession and domination (Morris 2013:162-163). Morris describes paternalism operating in Australia as:

[...] a social relation that is hierarchical, as well as entailing conditions of mutual obligation. In Australia paternalism grew out of the necessity to intervene, which morally justified a colonial system of continuing dispossession. Such paternalistic relations define Aborigines compliance and conformity as a legitimate return to the protection and guidance given them. Paternalism affirms the necessity of intervention in the social relations of these others as condition of an alleviation of social and individual degradation [...] What is important is that the emblematic images have invoked a visual orthodoxy that renders the Aboriginal body a docile body (Morris 2013:163).

Although, as Morris explains, this does not have meaning as a racial discourse but as a moral and political discourse, the idea that a form of indoctrination towards ‘good community behaviours’ is needed is the underlying one here, justifying the government direction. These mediated sensationalistic forms have an effect also in the way that Aboriginal organisations work to erase the damaged extended image. Thus, members of Aboriginal organisations become ‘responsible’ for controlling the behaviour of members of the Aboriginal community, especially in public events. The most clear instance that illustrates this, is during a Koori Radio organised event, the Yabun Festival. This festival celebrates Survival Day with music and concerts in Victoria Park — a big park outside the Redfern contour. It is a contest to Australia Day, celebrated the same day which recalls the first arrival of British to Australia. I was a volunteer at both the Yabun Festival 2014 and 2015 and on both occasions volunteers were told at the beginning of the day that alcohol consumption was strictly prohibited by anyone at the park. This prohibition became very insistent by the organisers who assured us as staff at the festival we could not work there with any symptom of alcohol or drug consumption, suggesting also smokers to go outside the park to smoke when wearing the T-shirt that identified them as staff. The T-shirt we were wearing in 2015 was printed on the back by sponsors’ signs such as the Australian Government, Australian Council for the Arts, Aboriginal Affairs NSW Government, City of Sydney, etc. Answering the question by a volunteer on what to do in case we found someone drunk in the park, the organisers told us to quickly inform the main organisers who could take control, and added: ‘In the Yabun, you won’t probably see anything like that. In fact, police prefer to be here with us today instead of in other celebrations in the city which are more troublesome’. Certainly there were police people around as at other events happening in the city that day, but as the organiser predicted, there were no incidents. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the insistence of organisers for all of us

to maintain control over the consumption of alcohol since it is already banned in NSW state in any public park and to request smokers not to smoke while wearing the T-shirt inside the park. Thus, volunteers—who were Aboriginal and other Australians plus a large amount of incomers to the country—were assuming ‘responsibility’ for a form of stepped control; starting by volunteers who in case of witnessing ‘bad behaviour’ had to notify to the Aboriginal organisers, who would take charge of the situation and, who, lastly—only if there were not more options—would ask for police intervention.

So far, these examples present Aboriginal organisers as responsible for the conduct of other members of the community regarding ‘good behaviours’ and the staff at the radio as responsible for limiting ‘bad behaviours’ to after 10 p.m. or just to erase them from the broadcasts and activities. From the Frantz Fanon perspective we see that Aboriginal people find themselves face to face with the language of the civilising nation by which the more they adopt the colonisers cultural standards the more they are elevated above an inferior position; i.e. they become whiter (Fanon 2008: 9). In Aimé Césaire’s (2006) words, it can be argued that bourgeois values of the Nation based on an ‘Westernised superiority’ enter in the form of paternalistic and saviour ads into the community and control public events. As argued by Tania Lewis (2000) Australia, when creating a multiculturalist national discourse and identity, has not resolved racial and ongoing colonial relationships with Aboriginal people. We can see this in the way that formal and informal education have been understood as a panacea to get Aboriginal people to behave and save themselves from (the assumed) ‘their own incapacity’ to deal with ‘superior White values or goods such as alcohol and tobacco’; and hence, ‘their own incapacity’ to ‘behave as citizens’. By emulating ‘White’ models they ‘climb scales’ into citizen recognition and into a guarantee of complying with compels from institutional rules. As Morris suggests, government agencies and other forms of directing the behaviour such as sponsors’ adverts, operate to constitute particular forms of subjectivity through many institutional sites of ‘governmentality’ that subtly permeate dominant cultural practices (Morris 2012: 22-23).

## 5. Mothers are responsible

Robert is a Mexican guy whom I met in different events organised by Koori Radio and during the Aboriginal Passport Ceremony. He seemed quite engaged with Aboriginal activism and interested in their activities. He has declared in our encounters his love for Koori Radio which he affirmed to listen to. Yet as well, he has confessed that at times he turned the radio off due to ‘the excessive amount of government adverts that you can hear. It’s really too much!’. I hope to have shown how paternalism acts in these adverts and has become a way to extend self-governing towards community behaviour and why Koori Radio has to use them to maintain the radio operation. For this last point of the chapter I will focus on the figure of the Aboriginal woman in the smoking ad to argue that this figure hides not



just a paternalistic attitude, but significantly it is also reproducing gender division by using the figure of a *mother as responsible* to transmit the moral self. Lastly, I will argue that in spite of all these forms of paternalistic education that get into the radio station policies, ads and diverse activities that are limiting the full expression of diverse subjectivities of Black identity and control of Aboriginality, nevertheless the radio station —well supported with a volunteer program— manages to maintain its objectives and resistance.

First I will present here the approach of other authors who have been studying state domination from perspectives which join governmentality and neoliberalism (Ferguson & Gupta 2002, Fisher 2013) and colonial governmentality (Bennett, Dibley & Harrison 2014). Daniel Fisher in his study about the Larrakia nation in the Northern Territory discusses in different works how Aboriginal organisations in their mediation with the state have executed what he initially named an ‘informal sovereignty’ (Fisher 2005, 2010) and *a posteriori* identified as a capacity ‘to become like the state’; i.e. to take on forms of state-like power vis-à-vis other groups (Fisher 2013:239; see also Fisher & Timmer 2013). He explains how the Northern Territory government has recognised Larrakia claims through forms of private contract with corporate organisations which gives the Larrakia nation some alternative forms of state power (Fisher & Timmer 2013:154). Through an administration of population, Fisher states, they establish and affirm rights of citizenship and pursue the biopolitical government of that citizenship (2013:252). To some extent Aboriginal entities in Redfern acquire a similar empowerment —through programs such as medical care, education, housing— and, following Fisher, reorganise Aboriginal citizenship in urban spaces. However, we must not forget here that these alternative forms of power do not exclude the governmental effect, which in the Koori Radio case, is the price these organisations ‘have to pay’ through advertisements and other means. Fisher as well expresses how media activism was ‘co-opted by bureaucratic government instruments in an effort to institutionalise and expand the gains of places’ (Fisher 2005:59).

The gains of places or spaces are well explained by Ferguson and Gupta (2012). Their approaches about the spatialisation of the state are very useful to analyse the scalar and unseen forms of state domination. As suggested by the authors, states represent themselves as superior in a naturalised form from a grassroots scale. Metaphorically the state situates itself and its authority through verticality and encompassment; i.e. through a bureaucratic symbolic representation which reaches down into the community in a “top down” manner. These kinds of dominations occur not only with Aboriginal people but also in other sectors of the wider society. Yet in the study of an ethnic group which has historically been so racially marked, it is necessary to identify forms of colonial governmentalities which operate coercively with techniques of pastoral power into practices of the welfare state (Bennett & Harrison 2014). Furthermore, we cannot cover all the superior naturalised forms of dominance in this case study if we do not include an intersectional perspective which identifies in its analysis not just race relations but also gender ones. In this case study we can see that ‘to slip past’ inside the community, the state takes an approachable form by disguising itself in an Aboriginal woman mask.

State takes an Aboriginal female figure as the performative representation of its authority via the meaningful embodiment, voice and language of an Aboriginal woman in advertisements. This woman appears responsible for her behaviour before her children, carrying on her a maternity load. If she keeps smoking, not only has she have failed into apprehending citizenship but also motherhood. The performative embodiment of the state here intrinsically makes an Aboriginal woman responsible for transmitting dominant sexist values. On the contrary, if she does not transmit them she has failed in transmitting the discipline which leads to citizenship.

Aboriginal women have historically been subjected to specific forms of government control and signaled as responsible for the family sphere. The work of Sally Babidge, focused on the history of state relations with Aboriginal people in the constitution of the Aboriginal family, shows how the colonial state has pervaded the most intimate aspects of Aboriginal people's lives. In this, women have been subjected to special control, particularly in relation to their sexual bodies. Aboriginal women and the Aboriginal domestic life has been also subjected to the 'public domain' through state control of their sexual selves and the gaze of bureaucrats and scholars in public reports (Babidge 2010: 132). In this advert, we can see how the figure of the woman is still seen as a fundamental part of the control of the family behaviour, of transmitting the moral self and responsible for providing an example for her kids. It is in this advert, the most repeated one on air times, that the saturating of Aboriginal mothers to be responsible of the community in Sydney occurs.

The work of Sally Babidge shows that the pervasive mechanisms of state control have changed Aboriginal social practices, yet also, that Aboriginal agency has maintained a response to dynamic practices of the state. She signals that the state/society relationship is 'more permeable than the notion of controlling institutional state against which dominated people can only resist or acquiesce' (Babidge 2010: 28). Instead, she argues, relations of power operate at many levels and Aboriginal people act as both agents and participants of the state rules as well as resisters. I hope to have shown which are the historical relations between the state and Aboriginal people which explain the form of governmentality and the participation of Aboriginal people and the radio station in the role of conducting the behaviour of the community. As well, to have shown that in spite of a whole series of propaganda about state support, the radio has to look for informal engagements to maintain its work. And importantly, that the forms of governmentality come designed in a intersectioned manner. Supported by the view of Sally Babidge, Heidi Norman and Daniel Fisher, my aim is to show in the following chapters that in spite of all these forms of Aboriginal participation in the extension of the state, there is still room for manoeuvre and resistance. As I am showing also with diverse cases studies in this thesis, resistance operates at diverse levels and in diverse ways, and as such we should pay attention to the diverse modes by which they make state requirement compatible with their agenda. For the following two chapters I will show those modes of resistance at Koori Radio which are the creative way to maintain their objectives of giving visibility to Aboriginal voices.

## **Chapter Eight: Decolonising dominant representations**

In the previous chapters I have suggested some of the strategies that Koori Radio engages in to maintain the operation of the radio as well as their objectives. In this and the next chapter I will do more analytical exposition of the works which are developed or promoted in the radio station. This analysis will show their attempt to decolonise dominant representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that classify their creative works and themselves as ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’. Much of the discussions that follow in chapters eight and nine centre the analysis on how urban Aboriginal people from Sydney are seen as ‘inauthentic’ Aboriginal people devoid of cultural ‘traditional’ elements to represent Aboriginality and how Koori Radio decolonises conceptions of traditionalism that sustain such arguments. The main arguments to decolonise the binaries ‘urban/remote’ and ‘traditional/contemporary’ are: the wide spectrum of cultural practices developed in the radio station that present a conjuncture of elements of Aboriginality, Indigeneity and Blackness working together; and the axiom that what makes an Aboriginal creation Aboriginal is the fact that it is made by Aboriginal people regardless of the amount of ‘traditional’ and/or ‘contemporary’ elements in it. This analysis will also show that when articulating Aboriginality with Indigeneity, the latter is discussed as a unique representation of traditionalist patterns. Rather they propose a wider vision that includes diverse subjectivities, artistic creations and modes of being Aboriginal.

In this chapter I will analyse how Aboriginal people in the urban area of Sydney navigate the ‘traditional/contemporary’ binary and instead show the expression of Indigenous identities in multiple forms. I will base the analytical exposition in this and the next chapter in two main theoretical frameworks which are shaping this thesis. One is the theory of articulation that is so helpful to explain how political identities are built and re-built in relation to diverse subjectivities and group shared experiences in a contingent manner. The other one is based on the concept of ‘transculturation’ proposed by Fernando Ortiz when discussing the concept of ‘acculturation’. Avtar Brah points out subjectivity as the space where the processes that give sense to our relation in the world occur, whereby the subjects experiment with their own identity. Hence, identities are marked by a multiplicity of positions that constitute the subject; so that, an identity cannot be fixed and solely one, but is a multiplicity of relationships constantly changing (Brah 2011: 152). Fernando Ortiz (1981, 1983) coined the term ‘transculturation’ to dispute the term ‘acculturation’ that dramatically announces the death of the so-called “primitive” cultures when in contact with colonisers. He instead proposes to pay attention to the multiple phenomena that originate after the contact of two or more cultures, by which those cultures in contact enter into a cultural transit that it does not mean to adopting a new culture—which is the ‘acculturation’ argument—but the creation of a new phenomenon that can have elements of both the old and the imposed culture, as well as others in contact. I link this idea of the concept of transculturation with the one of articulation of political identities to explain how Koori Radio decolonises dominant images of Aboriginal people based on traditionalism by presenting

Aboriginality as articulated with transnational elements of Indigeneity and Blackness as well as influenced by Westernised elements to express a multiplicity of the 'self' in continuous change.

### 1. 'Authenticities' and 'Inauthenticities'

Karl is a Gamillaroi and Birpai man in his 50s, who was born in Redfern. He has skills in diverse areas: he holds a diploma in Music from the Eora Centre in Redfern and studied at different institutes and schools about film, television, computer graphics, radio. During my fieldwork he was the production coordinator at Koori Radio and also he played the guitar and the bass with different Aboriginal bands in Sydney. He was also involved with Moogahlin Performing Arts (Moogahlin). Prior to this, he produced some documentaries and worked for SBS and ABC television and other radio stations. He is one example of the members at Koori Radio and Moogahlin who I could see interchangeably participating in both Koori Radio and Moogahlin's projects, festivals, concerts, etc. Karl's diverse skill set was common to many of my informants, many of whom were either musicians, actors, dancers, DJ broadcasters and had been somehow in theatre, dance, music and media for about the past twenty years, and who commonly combined the activities listed here. The multi-abilities of my informants are so wide that it would be an absurd and impossible labour on my side to try to classify them and their works in an homogeneous and unitary manner. Further, this multiplicity proves it is meaningless to classify any or the whole of their works in one of the poles 'traditional/contemporary practices' in which Aboriginal people are pigeonholed inside cultural and media industries. These industries are influenced by a culture traditionalism that, as Franca Tamisari notes, promote and celebrate Aboriginal art within the unspoken parameters that define what Aboriginality is or what Aboriginal people and artists 'can say and do, no more no less' (Tamisari 2004:96). Hence, Aboriginality, as an essence defined from the outside, is expected to respond to the binary that classifies Aboriginal people as either 'traditionally authentic' or 'contemporary inauthentic' in relation to geographical, phenotypical and cultural parameters.

Diverse authors from different disciplines point these geographical, phenotypical and cultural marked categories of Aboriginal people who are romanticised: those in the 'remote' areas of Australia are seen as 'traditional' and 'authentic'; while those in 'urban' areas such as Sydney are ostracised as lacking 'authenticity' or 'real' Aboriginality (see for instance the works of Keen 1988; Gibson 2013; Casey 2012; Ginsburg 1993; Grossman 2003; Carlson 2016). Following their works, what the last two chapters of this thesis are about is the diverse manners in which Aboriginality is subjectively and group built in Redfern and Sydney by the many and diverse musical, theatrical and other artistic expressions. Appreciating how Aboriginality has transculturated in this settled, urban context offers notions of 'alternative authenticities' or 'counter-authenticities' that emerge exempt from rigid and conflicting categorisations.

In the previous chapter I explained how a model of Western industrialised societies was introduced in Australia seeing in the market the best way for individuals to climb social scales. So the interest here is to see what opportunities this market offers for Aboriginal artists and in which ways Aboriginal people have been represented in films, performances and other artistic expressions such as music from a culturalist perspective. Marcia Langton (1993) and Frances Peters-Little (2003) made an analysis of the dominant representations of Aboriginal people in artistic and mediated spheres throughout history. They offer extensive data that show how the binary ‘traditional/contemporary’ so present in media and art industries has operated to represent those from remote areas as ‘primitives’ or ‘savages’ versus those from urban areas as ‘acculturated’. The art and media industries are both interconnected and marked by what the market wants or dictates. In this sense, remnants of ‘tradition’ are not valorised and instead an imagined purity and authenticity of tradition untainted by colonization is demanded (Gibson 2013:54). In this binary, the possibilities of transculturation are non-existent and assume that Aboriginal people have rather been ‘acculturated’ by the coloniser-Westernised forms and have not maintained a cultural purity and isolation as elements that sustain the Indigeneity. Thus, what the work of Koori Radio and other Aboriginal organisations in Redfern and Sydney come to do, is to add more elements to the marker ‘traditional practices’ that defines the Indigeneity; to break this dualism by performing *other authenticities* and creating space for creative expressions that dismantle the binary.

During the time I spent at Koori Radio much Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music passed through my hands. Some of these were new releases of CDs and EPs of the most contemporary musicians from diverse parts of Australia; others were older releases. Their styles were also very diverse: ‘traditional’ music from the Torres Strait Islands, instrumental and yidaki —didgeridoo— music, hip-hop, R&B, electronic, country, pop, rock, reggae, etc. Through the editing of this music I came to appreciate the varied Aboriginal expressions in music. As shown during the conversation reproduced in chapter six between three young broadcasters at Koori Radio, it was common practice to hear my informants saying *educate them* when others seemed not to know about the past, the history or the reality of Aboriginal lives. Thus, many of my informants have spent a long time *educating me* about Aboriginal musicians and actors. Some of that knowledge passed to me was possible to corroborate and some not. Yet the significance of this passing of knowledge rests in the desire of my informants to bring to light *inauthenticities* or counter-authentic music; i.e. to show how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and performances have for a long time been rich and diverse and that included in those areas which are mainly seen as ‘remote’ and ‘authentic’ areas, transculturation with ‘external’ musical elements has also occurred. The Grandfather, Karl and Tom were those who spent more time telling me about these musicians. Warumpi Band was one of the most frequently mentioned bands among them: they were a country-rock band from the Northern Territory whose members were Aboriginal, apart from one — Neil Murray. Murray’s presence, they maintained, had led a record company to not contract them as that would not represent country-Black music. Other examples of musical heterogeneity were Harold Blair — a tenor singer from Murgon (Queensland) who achieved international recognition; Georgia Lee — jazz singer from Cairns (Queensland); Wilma

Reading — Lee's niece, who also achieved international recognition. These singers, in spite of achieving some international recognition, are not so well known in Australian music history. However, Jimmy Little remains one of the main figures in the Aboriginal music in Australia and is a pioneer country musician who had a show on TV that provided room for Aboriginal music (see in Walker 2014). The Grandfather, Tom and Karl's insistence on explaining me about all the achievements of these musicians is relevant as they wanted to show me the success they had outside Australian terrains and to prove their talent and abilities to develop diverse music styles.

While I was told about the stories of these musicians and I edited some of their music, I could witness the attempts of some of the other musicians to get room in the marketed industry. Some of them reported having been rejected by radio stations due to their music not sounding like 'Aboriginal music'. For instance Ben, a hip-hop artist from Adelaide, affirmed his music has been labeled as too influenced by U.S. hip-hop and hence lacking Aboriginality and attractiveness. As discussed by Karl Neunfeldt, a scholar who has extensively studied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music, Aboriginal music has been using 'contemporary' elements to offer an emic perspective in an attempt to counterbalance 'the persistently negative ones commonplace in the media' (Neunfeldt 2008:454). In this regard, the work of Koori Radio has come to be a counterpoint to erase negative representations yet also showing a wide spectrum of artists and varied styles. In the attempt of Koori Radio to provide room for any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music, there is no questioning of how much their productions resemble an idea of Aboriginal art or music. In Heather's words, Koori Radio is trying to fill 'the voice that the mainstream media doesn't provide. If you kept watching or reading only commercial media you wouldn't even realise that Aboriginal people exist, that we have all those talented musicians out there!'

As Marcia Langton signals, the most 'natural form of racism in representation is the act of making the other invisible' (Langton 2003:13). Indeed what has been less highlighted in the media and art industries is the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to perform, mix, create and re-define diverse artistic styles. So certain Aboriginal representations are rendered invisible as Aboriginals. Further, since there is a dominant belief that the 'real' Aboriginal art should remain static, Aboriginal people in urban areas who were in most rapid contact with colonisation, are considered to have disposed of their culture (Keen 1988). Yet this position ignores that, as Lin Onus argues, Western art is equally a 'mixture of existing practices and influences' (Onus 2003:93), or as I am arguing following Ortiz, it has transculturated as much as the 'colonised' peoples' cultural forms. In this sense anthropology has also played a role into overarching categories of Aboriginal people in Australia by polarising them as 'remote' —tribal, traditional or traditional orientated— and 'urban' or 'settled' (Gibson 2013: 5, 57; see also Moreton-Robinson 2012).

Invisibility becomes the worst enemy of *inauthentic* ways to construct Aboriginality. Since 'authenticity' is a central axis in the discussions between states and Aboriginal people for land-rights,

demands for tradition have become ‘both burden and opportunities’ (Vincent 2013:37) which are widely reflected in diverse spheres of Aboriginals’ lives. Music and performance are fixed into these cultural categories in which the realm of culturalism predominates and importantly, where their bodies become *cultural bodies* which must coincide with ‘authentic dark bodies’. Some of my informants asserted to have heard that some Aboriginal performers have to paint their bodies to ‘look darker’ in mainstream films. Although I did not find any person who could say this happened to themselves, it is worth noting that the ‘real’ Aboriginal comes embodied inside the ‘economy of authenticity’ (Casey 2012:2) and Aboriginal people have in like manner seen their bodies and what ‘covers’ them exposed to culturalist valuation. As I will further explain, this references a real history of this practice. Some of the Aboriginal people I talked with who said this is still occurring proposed that although there are recent changes, the logic underpinning ‘black bodies’ associated with the ‘real Aboriginal’ still exists.

Tradition is understood by culturalist perspectives as having a strong connection to culture. As mentioned above, the problem is not merely one of racial discrimination but determines which are the specific aesthetic, historical and political tendencies in each era which mark the ‘primitivisation’ of pre-colonial practices and the ‘modernisation’ and loss of culture of the post-colonial ones. Yet to present elements from both poles does not permit a clear classification for the market. The emphasis on a ‘traditional Aboriginality’ has limited the chances for Aboriginal people to play roles inside the performance and musical world. It was not until 1955 that Aboriginal actors were star performers for first time in a movie: ‘Jedda’(Chauvel 1955). Before this, White performers painted their bodies to play Black roles. There have been different representations of Aboriginal people illustrated in films, documentaries and literature. Frances Peters-Little provides an historical approach from the 18th century onwards by classifying the themes into five: 1) patrons of nature’s gifts — where Aboriginal people were voiceless subjects which formed part of the native fauna and flora; 2) infantile creatures of innocence — based on Darwinist beliefs which consider Aboriginal people at a childhood stage; 3) black naked brutes — which see Aboriginal people as incapable of taking care of anything material; 4) torn between two cultures— which presumes that White people do not move between two worlds; 5) doomed for extinction — which is influenced by anthropologist’s works obsessed with preserving the culture from extinction (see Peters-Little 2003).

Geographically, physically and culturally speaking, those Aboriginal people in the central and northern areas of Australia fit *better* inside the descriptions above, which is expressed by the disproportionate amount of existent film material about these locations and the scarce amount about urban areas (Peters-Little 2003: 33). Peters-Little suggests that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal film-makers are nowadays expected to maintain the binary in their representations as both work within postcolonial society. She appeals to her experience working in the industry with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal film-makers to affirm she is ‘yet to meet anyone who makes a film for the sole purpose of inciting racial hatred’ (2003: 17). In addition, she points to the fact that inside television and radio women’s in general and Black men’s voices in particular are ‘less demanding’ than White men’s voices (2003:30).

The core of my position is precisely to analyse why the voices of women in general and Black men in particular are not seen as ‘attractive’ or ‘demanding’ for the market in any other form than ‘traditionalistic’. I will draw on the analysis undertaken by Arlene Dávila (2001, 2012), bell hooks (1992, 2015) and Suki Ali (2004), who show the illegitimacy of the existing models of racialized oppression (Ali 2004: 89) which dominate in the capital market in an intersectioned manner and mark the ‘White, heterosexual, middle class men’s *voice* and *body* as demanded in detriment to *Others*.

Arlene Dávila’s work with Latin American communities in New York (2001) analyses how cultural and media commodifications have whitened subjects of different backgrounds to make them ‘attractive objects’ to the capital market. Since capitalism was settled under a dominant perspective which values the ‘White, middle-class, heterosexual, male’ domination, those who do not fit this must suffer an embodiment ‘change’ to participate in that capital market. However those who fall outside the dominant commodification might also get the chance to ‘jump into’ the capital market by providing a ‘traditional Otherness’ which is attractive enough for traditionalist conceptions which consider subjects as ‘exotic objects’ and by extension ‘primitives’. This ‘traditional Otherness’ in turn must come accompanied by an embodiment of ‘traditional or dark bodies’ which ‘guarantees’ the *authenticity* and *uniqueness* of the cultural products. The bodies and practices which are not inside either the ‘traditional Otherness’ nor the dominant White definition, remain in an *undefined* position—which clashes with the binary ‘tradition/contemporary’ of the capital market. As said before, an *undefined* position is not what the market demands; i.e. when artistic productions are commodified the market entails labelling which in the case of Otherness is frequently defined based on principles of culturalism. bell hooks describes the representation of Black people in the U.S. as either ‘Black folks’ or ‘Brown folks’ the latter alienated from the dominant White folks to a ‘twilight zone of disidentification’ (see in Ali 2004:89). Hooks states, that when analysing mediated forms such as films we must expand our critical discourse so that we are not simply labelling a film or filmmakers as racist, but we need to analyse the complexity of what is taking place; i.e. to identify the forms in which some Black of mixed descent are seen as in the middle ground and devoid of Black identity. In here, the tensions of race and racism intersect with others such as sex, sexuality and class struggle (hooks 2015:156). Suki Ali takes hooks’ approach to stress the ‘disidentification’ of Black descendents of mixed people and signals that the analysis should be on seeing why these ideas permeate in mediated forms instead of considering whether the ‘fault of the filmmakers is’ clear or not (Ali 2004:89). Thus, my aim is to dismantle some forms of intersectioned oppression with urban Aboriginal people in Sydney that act in artistic and mediated spheres devaluing their Aboriginality. By delving into the Koori Radio and Moogahlin creative forms to contest the binary of ‘authenticity/inauthenticity’, we will see how they reinforce and articulate their identities with responses to the rigid categories of Aboriginality, Indigeneity and Blackness.



## 2. 'Real' Aboriginal people in Sydney?

The Indigenous tourism sector is hoping to capitalise on increasing numbers of international visitors to Australia that has earned the country more than \$6 billion over the past year.  
[NITV Subhead News (NITV 2015)]

By 'Indigenous experience', they're not wanting to go to a museum, art and go to a pop up store along George Street that's not run by Aboriginal people and selling manufactured artifacts like boomerangs and things like this [...] They're wanting something really authentic that's run by Aboriginal people.  
[Interview to Iwara Travel director Steven Satour at NITV News (NITV 2015)]

George Street is one of the busiest streets in Sydney around which some museums and art galleries are located. Beside the material presence of Aboriginal art and symbols in different parks, museums and other locations in Sydney and NSW, as suggested above, the 'Dreaming and tradition as indices of authenticity are viewed as proportionally possessed more by Aboriginal people living in the centre or north' (Gibson 2013:54). When observing tourist advertisements in Sydney, destinations such as Uluru and Arnhem Land feature prominently, in spite of the existence of 'sacred' places in Sydney and NSW. This is another instance which shows how much Aboriginal art in Sydney and NSW is overlooked and discarded as a 'non-real Aboriginal expression' in relation to the culturalism that I have been referring to so far. As I aim to show, the work at Koori Radio to promote any form of art beyond what is attractive for tourism and what is considered 'real' or 'authentic' counteracts these ideas with a strong re-articulation of Aboriginality through verbal and creative expressions. The analysis of the public verbal exposition of the Aboriginal identity in the radio helps to explain how they include diverse subjectivities into Aboriginality articulated with Blackness and Indigeneity. Further, how they counteract the cultural and physical markers that question whether Aboriginal people in Sydney are 'real'. This questioning about the existence of 'real Aboriginals' in Sydney was persistent during my whole time in Sydney. It was specially significant in my early moments there in which I was advised or suggested by diverse people—including some scholars—to go to the Northern Territory to either do my research there or at least visit it and not leave Australia without having a 'real' experience of Aboriginal Australia.

I will commence by an introduction of Aboriginal art in NSW and its reception by authorities and tourism. Sylvia Kleinert studies tourism in southeast areas of Australia, offering interesting data that explains the forms of transculturation that have occurred in this zone and the extent to which NSW Aboriginal art has been underrated. While discussions about tourism in Indigenous communities has been argued as a way to extend imperialism (Nash 1989), Sylvia Kleinert analyses some positive effect of tourism. She explains that Aboriginal involvement in tourism has a long history in south eastern Australian, starting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century at missions and reserves. For instance, La Perouse in Sydney became a place for recreational visitors from nearby cities who went there to 'encounter with a primitive other' (Kleinert 2012:86). She signals the significance of these forms of tourism because it permitted a means of 'keeping up the culture' for Kooris of NSW

contributing also to its resurgence in the 1970-80s. These forms of cultural production in NSW were carried out in opposition to authorities who saw them as potentially disruptive to assimilation policies. It is remarkable that, as Kleinert sustains, while in an earlier era government authorities tried to squash Aboriginal commercial engage, today that is precisely what is being demanded of Aboriginal communities (Kleinert 2012: 87). Kleinert takes a transcultural position to signal that cultures mutually engage in processes of appropriation, collaboration and adjustment and argues that Aboriginal people in south eastern Australia have never ceased to engage in the production of small artifacts such as boomerangs and baskets made for local use and for sale to collectors. The problematic of these objects, as she signals, is that they were seen or labelled by some ethnographers just as evidence of cultural decline (Kleinert 2012: 88). In recent years Aboriginal art has become critically and internationally acclaimed, represented in museums and galleries such as those of George Street. However, there is still an overlook of artistic forms of southeastern Australia, responding to the attributed acculturation of Aboriginal people in NSW into Westernised forms and its influence.

As I am arguing, geographical positions mark differences for these artists because of the ignoring of Aboriginal art in NSW. Although State bodies have been interested in protecting sites of Aboriginal significance for tourism —‘particularly where there was rock art’ (Beckett 2012: 108)— the extended idea that Aboriginal people of mixed descent in settled Australia ‘have not distinctive culture’ (Keen, 1988:1) effaces ‘real authenticity’ for Aboriginal people in urban contexts where there is a high number of mixed descent. Since Aboriginality in Sydney is frequently questioned as such, their ethnic belonging remains as well under questioning. The majority of the Aboriginal people I met in Redfern and other areas in Sydney are of mixed descent, thus being susceptible to being labeled as ‘non-authentic’. Yet this problematisation became bigger in those cases in which they were light-skinned or the so-called ‘fair’ Aboriginal people. This is the case of Tom, who in conversations reported to ‘feel very angry when people say I don’t look Aboriginal’. As well, Heather, who chatted with me for a long time about how these suspicious forms of questioning her Aboriginality due to her physical appearance made her feel:

It’s been a passion for me to find who I am, d’you know? I’ve been wondering ‘where is that white blood coming from?’ I’ve always been a fair skin Black-fella but I grew up as a Black-fella. Even though Gubbas<sup>35</sup> wouldn’t ever pick me for a Black-fella.

So we [her family] always knew that we were Blacks and I think I’ve been treated a little bit differently. It depends on,.. It’s funny actually. Because my sister’s darker than me and she’s got more obvious Aboriginal features. So if another Black-fella is on the train would say ‘Hello sister’ to my sister and I’m like,..., fucking,..., who am I? D’you know? Just a piece of shit or something? (laughs). Because they don’t,... It’s in both sides of the community! Sometimes you are not black enough for Blacks and you’re not white enough for Whites. So you are something in the middle. But having said that, I always identify as Aboriginal, because that’s what I am!!

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<sup>35</sup> Slang which refers to White Australians, derived from the word for ‘government’.

Ángeles: So, to be Black means something more than skin colour?

Heather (laughing loudly): Yeah! Yeah! It's not just a colour of your skin. It's something that is within you, as well as in your spirit. Yeah, it's in all that you are.

Heather is daughter to a member of the Stolen Generations who lived in the Kinchela Boys Home established by the Aboriginal Protection Board from 1924-1970 as part of the process of assimilating mixed Aboriginal people into White society. She referred to herself both as *Black fella* and *Aboriginal*, thus counteracting the perception by the public and, as she assured me, other Aboriginal people, of her not-looking 'Aboriginal' due to her fairness. She claims her Aboriginality in verbal expressions such as *that's what I am!!* and others when referring to herself as 'Blackfella'. The way she and others in the radio claimed the articulation of Blackness with Aboriginality embodies subjectivity in the way they both contest the signifiers that have racially marked Aboriginal people in Australia and also divide them. The conjunction Black-Aboriginal was reproduced in daily conversations and broadcasts in which Aboriginality was articulated in the inclusion of 'fair bodies' inside a Black identity. Broadcasters at Koori Radio, when introducing people in their programs, asked them 'who is your mob?' —for Aboriginals— and 'which one is your background?' —for non-Aboriginals— instead of 'where are you from?'. This concretises the attachment and belonging of a person to some of the Aboriginal nations as an assertion of Aboriginality-Indigeneity through the connection of their specific nations-languages with the ancestries of each person. An Aboriginal ancestry acknowledgment acts against accusations of 'inauthenticity' of urban and fair Aboriginal people. So that, the spirituality on Heather's ancestries represents her Blackness and Aboriginality further than how her body looks and whether she maintains 'traditional' practices. The formalism of verbal expressions of their nations-languages was also reproduced in their conversations outside broadcasts when they met other Aboriginal people. However, outside this formalism, verbal identifications responded to assertions that gather different nations by 'We, Aboriginals' and for 'other Others' such as Torres Strait Islanders or Africans by 'We, Blackfellas'. So that the assertion of Aboriginality was confluent with that of Black identity that further tied them with other ethnic groups in the radio.

Black as 'something more than a skin colour' is the result of an articulation of Black-Indigenous identities within the Aboriginal identity as expressed at Koori Radio, which breaks with rigid differentiations of Aboriginal people, such as 'urban/remote', 'fair/dark skinned', 'contemporary/traditional'. As I argued in chapter six, Aboriginality has been marked by a double burden of racial discrimination as Black and Indigenous. To understand how these markers have acted in Australian history, I will go to the period of colonisation and posterior policies that have shaped Aboriginal lives. Anthropologists have mapped the existence of around 250 'nations' in pre-colonial Australia. Ian Keen signals that the divisions between these pre-colonial 'nations' were based on criteria of language, locality and descent (Keen 1988:3), which today are the elements of recognition represented in the enquiry 'Who is your mob?'. These original populations were reduced by the coloniser into a single category: *Aborigines*, that understood them as 'primitive native' or 'indigenous', in contraposition to

Europeans, seen as civilised. Bronwyn Carlson whose work (2016) is focused on the politics of identity in Australia and the authentication of Aboriginality, shows up the political processes that have been dividing Aboriginal people from these first contacts with colonisers. She explains how soon after the arrival of the British in order to found a penal colony, in 1788, racial and biological determinants became dominant markers as an expression of the dominant biologist ideology reigning in Europe. These were the times of the Enlightenment in Europe which ‘celebrated’ a supposed European male intelligence who stood at the top of a global human racial tree, creating diverse hierarchies. From the first mixtures of Aboriginal people and Europeans a racial schema was created which divided them between ‘full-blood’ (seen as archaic survivors but assumed to be a ‘dying race’ impossible to assimilate) and ‘part-Aboriginal’ (people with an admixture of European blood and genetic inheritance that embodied their capacity to progress culturally) (Carlson 2016:19-20). Afterwards, there was a series of shifting policies that defined them during the nineteenth century acting differently in each Australian state but sharing the marker of quantum of Aboriginal and/or European blood. These differentiations, as Carlson signals, became determinant for subsequent policies of assimilation for those ‘part-Aborigines’ being supported with blood tests that classified them in an administrative manner as ‘full-blood’, ‘half-caste’, ‘quadroon’, ‘octoroon’, etc.

The first state to introduce the concept of ‘half-caste’ was New South Wales in 1839. The impact of the arrival of the British from 1788, as Aileen Moreton-Robinson explains (2012), was geographically differentiated since in the Northern Territory, for instance, the occupation occurred later and some of the Aboriginal people there maintained a predominantly hunter-gather existence until about 1880; as well as retaining their languages and other cultural elements. Sydney being the first place where colonisers arrived, the miscegenation in areas such as New South Wales was longer in time and had a bigger presence specially in the urban areas. This geographical difference has emphasised the posterior differentiations that emerged articulated by their mixture with other cultures and in the lightening of dark bodies. In urban contexts where there is the highest percentage of mixed descent, governments were also limiting Aboriginal identification to those who were considered less than ‘half-castes’ (see in Dodson 2003). As shown in governments’ reports, the lighter the person the more susceptible to assimilation and ‘salvation’ into the ‘civilised White world’ (Barwick 1988:30; Foster 2000). The assimilation purpose was to uproot those skinned people from their ethnic belonging by moving them away from the community; a distance that in part provoked the cultural deficit of which Aboriginal people in Sydney are currently ‘accused’. As well, this had a posterior effect on the ways by which Aboriginal people recognised each other. As an example, I will reproduce here the words of Sarah, who moved to live and study in the city of Newcastle in NSW in the 1980s, where she first faced this division:

I was the only Indigenous student in that school. Well, I thought! The only Black Student there. And then one day, like at the end of the term there was a talking meeting for Indigenous students. I walked there and I was like: ‘I can’t see where the bloody room is! I must be in the wrong room!’ I was looking, looking... I found the room but there was nobody there. All I

could see was all these White students! And I went to the office and asked: ‘Where’s the meeting happening?’ ‘It’s there! You were in there!’ ‘There’s nobody in there!’ I was expecting brown skin people or black skin. When I was in there all of them were our mob, apparently. Aboriginal students! But none had ever identified or acknowledged each other or acknowledged me,.. And I just was hoping that in this bloody school for two years and thinking I was the only Black student here. And then I was in the function with this 25 Aboriginal students. Or Torres Strait Islander, who knows! I wasn’t the only one, but they never identified. They kept it all secret; they rather shamed about it or some of them were just to claim up their studies. I was really, really stunned, and then, secondly a bit hurt. Why am I not good enough to make friends with me, when they are obviously Aboriginals or Torres Strait? But there was a whole time that, even still then,.. that racism,.. People didn’t want to identify in case they had hard times at school or they were just using it for outstanding.

The reasons why Aboriginal people have hidden their Aboriginality are various. The most important is related to assimilation policies designed according to the proportion of blood that I described above, which removed Aboriginal children from their families when they were ‘fair skinned’. Yet also, as the work of Yuriko Yamanouchi shows (2012) there are cases of people getting to know about their Aboriginal ancestry through genealogical research; others who only were told by their parents in the most recent times and as well, as a result of the existence of major acceptance of Aboriginal people in general accompanied by funding bodies, some people have decided to re-identify as Aboriginal. All these cases are nowadays highly controversial, specially when referring to ways to access Aboriginal programs that I will further detail. For now, I want to emphasise the fact that these forms of division of Aboriginal people have a political and colonial historical trail that in cases like Heather and Tom makes it a challenge for being recognised as ‘real Aboriginals’. The ways that Heather has to contest racial differentiation inside a group is through a strong ethnic manifestation which overtakes visual differences. When Heather is saying *Black* she is claiming Aboriginality which might not be phenotypically ostensibly yet it is easily recognizable in aesthetic, political and artistic manners through shared community codes of Blackness. In expressing Blackness she is manifesting Aboriginality in an articulated manner and from her words we can see that ethnic belonging is not solely connected to an idea of ‘dark-body’. This is specially significant because, as I explained before in the cases of Latin Americans in Madrid, power relations operate over the bodies of people in a hierarchically configured manner as ‘forms of differential racialisation’ by which they are not just differently racialised as a group but also differently positioned in respect to each other inside the group (Brah 2011:26). Similarly, Suki Ali has explained this differentiation inside ethnic groups as emanating from the ‘corporeality of race’ that is one of the dominant ideas that surged in Westernised societies in the 1980-1990s, that have come to be defined as the ‘new racism’ (Ali 2004:76). Much of the work at Koori Radio is directed towards erasing these differentiations, claiming that Aboriginal people in Sydney are ‘real’ with significant verbal reinforcement of their Aboriginality linked to Blackness —by referring to themselves as Black regardless of the darkness of their skin colour— and

Indigenous/Aboriginal —by proclaiming the name of their mob. In the following sections I will discuss other forms of verbal assertions and artistic expressions of Aboriginality.

### 3. It's Aboriginal music!

Karl liked to show me Aboriginal music when we happened to meet in the programing studio. One of those days he played a country song in an Aboriginal language. I asked him where that country influence on Aboriginal music was coming from. He replied very surprised: *It's Aboriginal music!* I have shown in chapter six that the influence of some musical forms from the U.S. on Aboriginal music is an example of the multiple local ways to identify 'with cosmopolitan forms of public culture such as reggae, R&B, and of course rap and hip-hop' (Fisher 2009:300). The work of Clinton Walker about the history of country music in Aboriginal Australia explains this music was one of the first music styles 'heard' in non-urban areas which had non-Aboriginal origin. Country music arrived in the form of touring country shows by the hands of the first White Australian-New Zealand country singers (Walker 2014: 12-13; Beckett 1993). Those tours and the story-telling character of country music attracted some Aboriginal musicians who started to play country. Kev Carmody, Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter and later Jimmy Little were the pioneers and opened a way for future country singer-songwriter generations (Walker 2004). Ase Ottosson explains that this country influence in the centre or 'remote' areas of Australia has been termed the '*real* country' music understood by Aboriginal people from these areas as apart from the U.S. style (Ottosson 2012:185). My attempt to ask for a chronological influence on Aboriginal country music failed on the basis that despite the influence that might exist —that Karl knew— the first possible label for Karl was *it's Aboriginal music!* For Karl the importance of a music production is that before labeling a music by its artistic genre it is labeled by its Aboriginality; and as I will explain later this is related to Koori Radio policies and how Aboriginality is seen at Koori Radio. On many other occasions Karl showed me songs and videos and told me stories about them. Yet this time my question, embedded in finding a cultural co-relation, was a bit offensive. When questioning about the external 'non-Aboriginal influence', I was *compromising* its Aboriginality.<sup>36</sup>

Whereas my emphasis in chapter six was on the engagements with transnational Black identities through different music styles and intercultural encounters, here I want to emphasise how local forms maintain Aboriginal Australian identity beyond transnational identities, diversity in music styles and —importantly— forms of commodification. Koori Radio policy attempts to 'fill the gaps' left by the media industry by promoting any kind of Aboriginal expression and by rejecting the binary 'traditional/contemporary' as the axis of domination. This is very significant because this radio station has been a pioneer in promoting musical Aboriginal forms that go unnoticed by other radio stations.

<sup>36</sup> See Deger (2006:10) to see other examples in which Aboriginal people use country and reggae music but claim its Aboriginality beyond external influence.

The radio station staff are proud of the fact that Koori Radio has been a pioneer in Australia in producing programs such as 'Indig-hip-hop'. The way in which this program started explains the challenge of 'non-traditional' practices to jump into forms of commodification. The founder of the 'Indig-hip-hop' program is the Grandfather. Apart from being a broadcaster at Koori Radio, the Grandfather is also a Jardwadjali musician. He is called by other broadcasters and musicians the 'Grandfather' not due to his age but because of his knowledge and experience producing and performing hip-hop music. Before working at Koori Radio he was traveling around Australia and other countries and got involved with many Aboriginal 'remote' communities. The Grandfather passed through small towns where he worked with Aboriginal young people on music/hip-hop workshops. This suggests the importance that hip-hop music has for Aboriginal Australia. As George Stavrias explains, hip-hop music emerged in Australia in the 1980s as a replication of that of the Bronx in the U.S. where it was born as a combination of social vectors such as poverty and racism (Stavrias 2005: 45). This hip-hop scene survived outside the music industry and big business by relying on strong local support. Australian hip-hop was rooted in working class areas both urban and rural, and in Aboriginal areas where people were attracted by the racially oppositional features of the Afro descendent in the U.S. Stavrias signals that we should get away from the discussion about how much Aboriginal hip-hop is influenced by the Black hip-hop of the U.S. and instead appreciate how much this music helps to articulate Blackness and negotiate identity (Stavrias 2005: 51). As well, the author explains how some hip-hop musicians like the Grandfather have conducted hip-hop workshops at various Aboriginal communities in 'remote' Australia to provide youth with artistic tools to express their everyday lives and concerns. Yet also, as the author signals, hip-hop music has become a powerful tool in helping Aboriginal youth negotiate their identity and deal with the often wrong representation of Aboriginal culture as 'a static culture, an opus operatum defined as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' according to the degree to which one lives traditionally' (2005: 52). Thus, we see the presence and importance that hip-hop has for Aboriginal people, in spite of this form being frequently ignored by the music industry which has seen hip-hop music as U.S. influenced and has historically focused more of its attention on the Aboriginal country.

On the trips that the Grandfather did among diverse communities he collected some hip-hop music that Aboriginal people were giving to him. This in the future became the axis that led to the creation of the 'Indig-hip-hop' show as he explains:

I had all those CDs that people were giving me and said: 'Listen to my song. I made the song'. I had a listen to it and I got back to them. D'you know what I mean? It was like: 'Keep doing what you're doing'. I got all these CDs ... All of these are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop artists. Obviously I got all these CDs from all different mobs. I had like a bundle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop music that none had heard before. I put all the CDs together I had a think about it and I thought: 'Yeah, maybe I can do a show at Koori Radio and play this stuff that I've accumulated. And I can be the only play-listener who have ever listened this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop!'

It was probably around 2005-2006. So there wasn't really Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop that wasn't getting that much exposure at all. So I put that on that show. From the first day that I was on, Aboriginal stations from all over the country were like 'Wow! Can we play this as well?' Obviously in the time internet,... We're talking about 2007, Internet is a way of life for all on the shadow. I thought: 'Actually, I can put it on internet and you can download it and all of yous can play it!'

And then from there National Indigenous Radio Service, which is the national server, said 'We wanna play it as well'. And then, the community radios and the White stations said: 'Could we have it as well?' 'Be my guest!' So from there there's also, until these days, more and more stations kept taking and taking this show. There was never a show like this, ever! Ever, anywhere, ever!! None ever has done a show like that before.

So all these stations are taking it. It's the only show which has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop. We don't play any other hip-hop; only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hip-hop gets played on this show.

Before playing this show for the first time at Koori Radio, the Grandfather passed by the first Aboriginal radio station in Australia— CAMMA— and produced his first Indig-hip-hop program from there. On his way back to Sydney he started to work at Koori Radio and continued it from there. In my last months at Koori Radio, the Grandfather resigned his position on this show. I helped him to edit some of the music he had collected to pass 'his legacy' to the new broadcasters of the Indig-hip-hop show. The majority of them were 'poor' quality recordings without any label or institutional support. Indeed much Aboriginal music has been handed down and shared around 'only for the common good, not commercial gain' (Walker 2014:17). However, work like the Grandfather's has been giving exposure to this music through his show and putting some artistic Aboriginal forms that are not so 'valued' into the public exposition as others are. Much of the music and artistic forms that someone can listen to on Koori Radio are located some place between the hermetic range 'tradition/contemporary'. As said at the outset, their music styles could vary from rock, pop, hip-hop, classical, yidaki-instrumental, opera, R&B, blues, jazz, reggae, dub, country to an etcetera as far as their creativity could reach. None of the musicians at Koori Radio knew how to play the yidaki yet knew how to play many other instruments or styles of music which were or were not classified as traditional. So what makes this Aboriginal art 'Aboriginal'? The answer is related to Karl's vision about country music: artistic expressions at Koori Radio are understood as 'Aboriginal' because they are produced by Aboriginal people; i.e. a non-Aboriginal person could know how to play the didgeridoo yet that did not make that music Aboriginal as it was not interpreted by an Aboriginal person. To the extent that a cultural practice was not interpreted by an Aboriginal person it was considered as not relevant for the radio nor appropriate for broadcasting. This particularity makes Koori Radio a unique radio station in Australia since it is the only radio station — including other Aboriginal radio stations— which promotes 99% of Aboriginal music and art and Indigenous and Black music from other countries. This



particularity has a political meaning since it aims to present a form of resilience and resistance to the logics of the capital market that I will further extend.

Crystal McKinnon asserts that many Aboriginal artists and musicians declare ‘that what makes their creative works ‘Aboriginal’ is that an Aboriginal person created it’ (McKinnon 2014:371). She analyses these creations as ‘texts’ which come embodied with identity. This identity cannot be removed from the text— no matter whether the artist attempted to insert Aboriginality or not— such that these textual productions become also cultural productions. Yet why are some identities such as the Aboriginal more ‘remarkable’ or labelled than others in the process of creation and commodification as cultural productions? I argue that the emphasis on *authenticity* connects here with the one on *ethnicity* in the capital market. Hetti Perkins explains that the construction of authenticity is fueled by a Western obsession with the ‘other’ and capitalist impulses to locate and exploit ‘new’ areas (Perkins 2003:101-102). By a transnational comparison, I follow the work of Timothy Taylor who identifies a surge of interest in *ethnicity* inside the musical market in the U.S. He explains that from 1970s-1980s onwards an increased interest in the commodification of *ethnicity* in music emerged due to some members of the dominant culture in U.S. perceiving themselves as lacking an ethnic identity (Taylor 1997:7). From here the interest in *ethnicity* has extended to other Westernised societies, reflected in the mentioned growing tourism interest in the ‘other’. Taylor also points to the binary ‘traditional/contemporary’ as acting in the market, the traditional pole being the one which has provided room for musicians from Africa and other places *ethnically* described. When these musicians ‘dare’ to work outside the ‘traditionalist’ parameters, their music is labelled as ‘hybrid’ inside the market. However, this hybridisation, Taylor argues, it is not applied to Western or Westernised musicians who incorporate ‘ethnic’ elements from other cultures into their creations (Taylor 1997:201) as in the case of White and other non-Aboriginal musicians using the didgeridoo. As Taylor suggests, capitalist structures tend to protect Western subjects, which are seen neither as pure nor impure and are constructed outside ideas of authenticity (Taylor 1997:22). However, when labels are used for Others they are more used to label musicians instead of their music (1997:16) and their forms enter into a labelling of rather ‘authentic’, ‘inauthentic’ or ‘hybrid’. When considered ‘authentic enough’ they are also labelled as ‘world music’. The term ‘world music’ has been on the rise since the 1980s after the emphasis on ethnicity. Its commodification and labeling is another expression of the binary ‘tradition/contemporary’ which was reflected in the division ‘the West/the Rest’. Under this axis Western musicians are classified inside general labelings such as ‘rock’ and all the hugely diverse bodies of ‘the Rest’ go into the same box (Taylor 1997: 14). As the author explains, this classification has later been fractured into subgenres but the axis continues to be dominant. Specifically, in this case study, Aboriginal artists are predominantly included in ‘the Rest’.

The space or room provided by Koori Radio for the music sets up new structures of Aboriginal authority onto political initiatives to break with the binary and also to break with assumptions of hybridisation by claiming that ‘*it’s Aboriginal music!*’ no matter what form it takes and its external

influence. Inside Koori Radio, what can be perceived or labelled as world music, hybrid or inauthentic in the market emerges as fresh forms of Indigeneity, to the extent that ‘ethnic’, ‘Indigenous’ are rebuilt as elements to further the continuity of ‘traditional’. In the next section I will show how Koori Radio re-organises market labeling and embeds them with other meanings.

#### 4. Any Black music today?

Much of what has been exposed in this section is related to the work I did at the radio station of cataloguing the music they received. Doing this work I could better understand that to say Black and Indigenous involved much more than one’s physical appearance and identity. As I aim to show, it was about articulating shared experiences in historical racist suffering and colonisation by various peoples. During my time at Koori Radio, they received monthly an average of 25-30 CDs coming from the Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (amrap) which distributes contemporary Australian music to community radio stations in Australia. In addition, some musicians sent or brought in their CDs directly to the station. Whereas, in the CDs sent by amrap, Aboriginal CDs did not usually exceed 3% of the total received, artists who delivered their music directly were mostly Aboriginal or Black-Indigenous people from overseas. Unlike the latter ones, CDs from amrap came labeled with a sticker which described the music/musicians. Stickers indicated the genre of the music — which at times was classified such as ‘Adult/Contemporary’— yet when artists were Aboriginals the word ‘Indigenous’ was added. In my first chats with Heather we settled that I would create a data-base of the music they were receiving. Some programs at Koori Radio play exclusively Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music like the one by the Grandfather; others are more specialised in African rhythms; others Maori, Fijian, etc, so that this data-base would be useful for a quick pick up of the music. On many days a week I used to spend much time at the radio checking on the internet the backgrounds of these artists, to later edit those who were selected as inside the policy of the radio, put their details on the data-base and eventually on dalet. Koori Radio policy was established with rules about the distribution of percentages of the music that can be played at the station: 33% from Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, 33% from Black from other countries, 33% from Indigenous from other countries and 1% of White artists whose lyrics make reference to Aboriginal, Black and/or Indigenous issues. Since broadcasters and other staff knew many of the artists much better than me, gradually they were offering themselves to help with my tasks. I sat close to Kevin, a young Aboriginal man who was in charge of organising the radio’s outside events. One day in my first weeks there he just came and asked directly: ‘I want to know what are you doing’. I explained to him and he offered to help me:

Ask me, or ask any of us. We know many of those artists. I’m going to show you a website [Unearthed<sup>37</sup>]. It’s a competition. The bands which are there are in a competition. You can have a look here. If they are Aboriginals they will say here the word Indigenous. This ones doesn’t... But I’m going to show you a friend’s band.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.triplejuneearthed.com>

He searched for the name of one of the Aboriginal singers well known and promoted in the radio and continued:

Ok,... She doesn't. But it's her fault, it's her fault!

Heather used to explain to me that she knew many cases in which Aboriginal singers did not use that label or asked journalists to not ask them about their Aboriginality during interviews. This and other issues made my work to identify them more difficult. In some cases I could find information on Facebook, Myspace and other social media. As the research conducted by Bronwyn Carlson shows, social media such as Facebook or Twitter has become an extended activity for many Aboriginal people to express their Aboriginality through photos and open written expressions which in turn serves to affirm their identity (Carlson 2016: 254-256). However, the limited access that I had to some of this information due to the privacy of some places made access to the information impossible. Thus, I used to appeal to the knowledge of Heather, Kevin and other members of the radio to streamline the long process, specially when some artists did not express their identities in those spaces. When I received the CDs from amrap I used to take the hip-hop CDs and go to ask the Grandfather. Many of the people working there got involved in my task and when passing by my desk used to greet me by saying: '*Any Black music today?*' So my desk became the place where new music arrivals were accumulated and staff passed by to leave CDs or ask about them. Some days I arrived at the radio and I could see a CD on my desk that somebody had delivered to the station. Most of the times some staff member had written a note such as: 'Angeles, please, edit this one and put him on ATSI music'. Yet one of those days I found a CD joined to a letter, which said:

Hi Koori Radio,

My name is Albert. I've sent through a cd of Deadly tracks, hoping the deadliest station will give them a spin.

I'm a Fijian boy mixed blood from Melbourne, about to hit Sydney on Sat Oct 4th for Fiji Day.

Would love for you to share the music and give us a play.

As I explained in chapter six, Koori Radio, in their attempt to promote Black and Indigenous music has attracted many artists such as Albert. Koori Radio proudly affirms to have been the first radio station to play 'Black bands' when they still were not known in Sydney such as the Fugees. Yet what is the classification that Koori Radio has been using to include non-Aboriginal Australian music? Engagements and solidarities in transnational communication between Blacks in Australia and U.S. for instance show that the circulation of commodified music and identities is pervasive and multidirectional (Taylor 1997:76). Forms of solidarity and engagements at Koori Radio have permitted a broad circulation of the commodified music and this has reinforced a transnational identification; yet as well, this has allowed and reinforced their particular identities. As mentioned before, Koori Radio takes the form of labeling that the capitalist market implements such as 'world music' yet it has given

them a different meaning. When working on the CDs I heaped them up in three groups: 1) artists about whom I could find their specific background and who were inside the policy, 2) those who did not fit inside the policy and 3) those about whom I could not find any reference to their background but showed some traits which could lead me to think they had Indigenous and/or Black backgrounds. Heather used to check my piles one by one; including those CDs whose musician background was explicitly identified as White. She used to remind me to avoid making a decision based on physical appearance and spent a long time making sure I was not wrong. She used to comment to me: ‘When somebody is Aboriginal you can tell, not only by their skin colour’<sup>38</sup>. When Heather approved my findings she expressed it by saying: ‘I agree with you’. These words attest to her willingness to listen to my opinion and other workers’ opinion. On many occasions in which we could not find any reference we asked broadcasters from those countries the artists were based in; i.e. if a band was based in New Zealand we consulted with Joe, the Maori broadcaster. Even with this help, at times the background checking could become confusing. Yet after a few months working in the radio I had learnt to ‘tell’ when artists were Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders, Pacific Islanders, Papua New Guineans and Maoris. Although I was wrong on many occasions, I have to admit that once I could ‘tell’ I expedited my work. Anyhow I had to prove their identity belonging by written or other means, since Heather wanted to avoid any mistake. Then, after my first checking, she sat down to do a double-check of my findings. On many occasions we ended up having big laughs and despairs to find that identity expressions, since many of the artists were not famous and not much information was available on the internet.

A new challenge arrived when I registered their details on the data-base. I made the data-base by following Heather’s advice. I created an Excel with different columns or ‘labels’. The first column was for Aboriginal artists where I noted the name of their mob or nation. The second was for Torres Strait Islanders; the third for Black people from overseas; the fourth for Indigenous people from overseas, noting in all of them similar details such as the city and country of birth. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians being mainly of mixed descent, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background was prioritised before any other, so that these artists were ‘labelled’ inside the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander column; and in case of artists who were both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, I noted in both columns. In this case, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labeling established some sense of what it means ‘to be Aboriginal’; i.e. Aboriginal identities are prioritised before other backgrounds and the word Aboriginal itself gathers Blackness and Indigenously. When artists were non-Aboriginals from Australia my doubt was: Is this artist Indigenous or Black, or both? Is there any distinction between them? So I had to decide whether I would include the artist in the Black or Indigenous column. However, for the majority of people I asked at Koori Radio whether there was any distinction: both Black and Indigenous meant the same thing that came to be articulated into a ‘Black thing’. So this distinction or gathering was not clear and

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<sup>38</sup> The work of Julie Carter shows other examples of how Aboriginal people affirm to be able to identify the Aboriginality of other Aboriginal people ‘perceived’ by the way Aboriginal people walk, talk and dress, not just by their skin colour (1988:68).

this became more complex when the policy opened more. I had included an extra column named ‘Other’ which became very recurrent to classify artists who gradually were included in the policy. One day we received a CD from a band who were Tuaregs from the north of Africa. Another day, from a White fella who talked about refugees issues. One of a group who said their singer was Aboriginal. We solved most of them by asking the opinion of other members. In the last case we asked George, who seemed not very convinced and said: ‘Maybe this is one of those cases in which they want to be Aboriginal’. Tuaregs were included inside the policy once Heather asked Rachel—one of the African broadcasters—about the history of Tuareg people: ‘Are some Tuaregs fair-skinned like me?’, Heather added. Rachel explained to Heather that Tuaregs were natives of the north of Africa and that after the contact with other cultures some of them were fair-skinned. Then Heather decided there was a ‘black-root’ in Tuaregs and their music should be included on dalet. Latin Americans were frequently included as well, when their Indigenous or African background could be proved.

I found that the boundaries of the radio policy were quite subjective in the identification of ‘Black-Indigenous’ artists when these did not express their identity publicly. The more we learnt about other societies the more Koori Radio felt they should amplify their policies to others such as Tuaregs or some Asians such as Indians who had suffered similar colonial or racist experiences to Aboriginal Australians. Yet actually, as said in the outset, their inclusion had not a clear ethnic character. Determination to include them was motivated by feelings of a shared historical injustice by colonisation processes and/or forms of racism; which reinforced the forms of solidarity and hence the acceptance of their commodified music—no matter how the market labels those artists.

The labeling on dalet worked slightly differently: music was mainly classified into three folders: 1) Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders; 2) World Music and 3) Australia Based. Inside the latter folder were Black and Indigenous artists from overseas living in Australia and White Australian and other White people. In the second, Black and Indigenous from overseas living overseas. At the same time, they were subdivided into genres subfolders. However, the division between the second and third classification marked no categories since broadcasters played them without distinction yet it was meaningful since the existence of the ‘Australia based’ folder suggests that either Black, Indigenous and White are understood to be ‘based on *Aboriginal country*’. And whereas the term ‘world music’ labels Otherness in the dominant market, it explains the transnational identity of Blackness and Indigeneity and solidarity towards other Black and Indigenous people at Koori Radio.

There were other series of difficulties which arose when CDs came labelled with the ‘Indigenous’ word. We received from amrap a CD of a band based in Melbourne with the Indigenous word on the sticker. When checking their specific background—i.e. the name of their nations-languages—I could not find out which member of the band was Aboriginal. At first glance they could be fair-skinned, I thought and went to ask to Heather. She resolved:

This might be a case in which they are not accepted by the community.<sup>39</sup> You can call amrap and ask them. Call the manager, tell them I told you to call them. But the manager probably won't know it. So you can call our sister community radio in Melbourne, 3 Kool and Deadly.

Amrap staff answered 'it's up to artists to write their backgrounds there', so provided email contact details. I called the 3KD Radio in Melbourne; also to Larrakia Radio in Darwin to ask about a few bands based there, as well as a couple of radio stations in Sydney who recommended some artists. None could provide more information beyond what I already had. Then Kevin, Karl and Heather suggested calling the artists. They gave me the 'authority' to call artists as a Koori Radio volunteer. When I told Kevin I was not sure about that idea, he replied: 'There's nothing wrong to be Aboriginal, Ángeles!', alluding to people who should not get offended to be asked. However, my lack of confidence to call artists was on seeing myself— a guest or an incomer to the country— calling people to ask them to 'prove' or declare their Aboriginality. Then Heather and I thought the best option could be to send an email to the bands. We worked hard to write an email which did not sound offensive to anyone. It was even difficult to find a title for the subject of the mail, which was settled as: *Koori Radio 93.7FM/Kr00 Music Policy Assessment*. After different considerations this is the mail that I sent to those bands:

Hi X,

We have received a copy of your CD via X.

Koori Radio 93.7FM/Kr00 has a very unique music policy – 99% Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and black Indigenous music from around the world. The final 1% of music is by non-Indigenous artists whose tracks are about Australian or world Indigenous issues.

We are currently assessing your music for possible broadcast on our station. Please confirm if you and/or any of your band members fit into the station's unique policy.

You can contact me via Koori Radio 93.7FM/Kr00 Program Manager at X calling me at the station on X.

I hope to hear from you soon.  
Good luck on your musical journey.

Best wishes,

Angeles Montalvo Chaves  
Koori Radio 93.7FM/Kr00  
Volunteer  
**Gadigal Information Service**  
Aboriginal Corporation

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<sup>39</sup> Bronwyn Carlson (2016) extensively explains about the bureaucratic processes that Aboriginal people in Australia need to follow in order to achieve Aboriginal acknowledgement and an Aboriginal certificate which confirm their Aboriginality. In this process it is determinant to achieve the approval from the Aboriginal community where the person lives in.

When I was sending this email I was reminded of the words of Heather on my first days at Koori Radio: ‘Some people say that we’re racist because we don’t put White music. But they don’t say that we have to do this because our music is not on other radios’. Answers I received were the followings:

1) Hey Angeles,  
Thanks for shooting through an email.  
Neither of those artists are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or black indigenous.  
Apologies for that!

2)Hi Angeles,  
Thanks for your consideration, but sadly I none of my music fits your specifications.  
I like the sound of that policy though, will try tuning in tonight.  
cheers,

3)Hello Angeles,  
It's X from X here. No none of us fit your criteria, and I totally understand. But I must say I do listen to your station sometime and think you all do a great job.

4)Hi guys,  
Thanks for the contacting us with this. Unfortunately X don't fit strictly into your unique music policy, however the engineer (X) who worked on and mastered their last two albums (X) has just produced X latest record ‘X’.  
I realise this is a vague link, so I understand if it doesn’t fit your criteria. But let me know regardless, would be great to be featured on the station.

And one day after he re-sent:

Also, aside from the vague link... We’re an ally of what Koori radio is about. Would be keen to support in any way.

During the time I was at Koori Radio all the answers we received were only from those who did not fit the policy and those who we thought had Black background never replied.

Parallel to this I kept working on other CDs. One of them was the soundtrack compilation of the film ‘Around The Block’ which came with the ‘Indigenous’ sticker. The film was recorded in Redfern and tells the story of an Aboriginal guy living there who wants to become a dancer. Considering the topic of the film and the sticker I assumed the artists in the CD were mainly Aboriginal persons yet I found out that between sixteen bands only one was Aboriginal; the majority were White artists from the U.S. and another two were Black artists from overseas. I showed this CD to Kevin and explained to him what happened. He took it with him and went to show it to the Grandfather. When Kevin came back he gave it to me and said: *This is disgusting!* Both the Grandfather and he were angry thinking of the amount of artists around Redfern who could form part of the soundtrack of a film based in Redfern and the life of an Aboriginal person.

This was not the only case in which I found non-Indigenous artists on CDs which not only were labelled as ‘Indigenous’ with a sticker yet also named as such. One day that I was working in one of these CDs, one of the radio staff warned me about that the CD which was named ‘Indigenous music’ had been done by a person who was not Aboriginal:

Informant: He’s not Indigenous. He works with Indigenous people but he is not.

Ángeles: So, why he is in a compilation of Indigenous music if he is not??

I: Because he's been working with Indigenous people. But he took a lot of money.

Á: From funding you mean?

I: Yeah.

To try to avoid cases like this, the double-check with Heather and others in the radio was really necessary. After a few cases in which I found out or I was advised that CDs with 'Indigenous' sticker or label were not or not all fully by Aboriginal artists, I stopped following the market labelling. There were some cases of CDs that were not resolved during my time there. Heather kept these CDs in case someday they answered and it could be sorted out if their music fitted on the radio policy to be played during broadcastings. The outstanding thing here is that the distinction that the market made for the 'Indigenous' label that it did not do with other artists was not always fully reflecting the reality. While labelling at the market sometimes shows rapid classifications, the work at Koori Radio shows a deeper and personalised research of the artists, that I did while I was there but that other staff did before my arrival. For instance, in the case of the CD about Redfern labelled as 'Indigenous' wherein there was only one Aboriginal musician and two other Black musicians from overseas, the rest of the thirteen artists were discarded and, following instructions by Heather I only included these three on dalet.

As shown so far the ways to articulate and live identities such as Indigenous, Black, Aboriginal are complex and they are embraced and expressed in diverse ways. Yet the dominant idea at the radio is that what makes an Aboriginal production Aboriginal is the fact that it was made by Aboriginal people. Koori Radio policies to promote Black and Indigenous music are attempting to decolonise fixed and external assumptions of Aboriginality and present multiple subjectivities and ways of being Aboriginal. In so doing, they are reinforcing alliances with other Black and Indigenous artists by promoting also their music creations. For the last chapter of this thesis I will go in more detail into analysis of their creative works; i.e. on the music and theatre works at Koori Radio and Moogahlin to see how they articulate Aboriginality, Blackness and Indigeneity in a transculturated manner that includes diverse subjectivities.



## **Chapter Nine: Breaking boundaries to express multiple selves**

Whereas the previous chapter stressed how Aboriginal people with urban Indigenous identities navigate the ‘traditional/contemporary’ binary, this last one extends this analysis to consider how Koori Radio and Moogahlin create routes to get around Aboriginal and especially non-Aboriginal art circuits where the binary dominates. In the aim to promote Aboriginal creative creations, they develop diverse strategies to expand their visibility around the city. The analysis of these creative strategies as well as some of their creations will show the exposition of their heterogeneity and as Bronwyn Carlson argues, the ‘variant selves’ that express the multiple modes of subjectivity that Aboriginal people negotiate daily (Carlson 2016: 171). Carlson draws on authors’ works already employed in this thesis (de Certeau 1999 and Butler 2009) to point out the variant selves that allow a wider expression or manifestation of being Aboriginal. While creating routes to access different Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art circuits they are facilitating the visibility of Aboriginal creations and subjectivities in their most diverse ways through musical, linguistic, performative and corporeal manifestations.

### **1. Gadigal music label: Producing music at Koori Radio**

Every morning on my way to the radio station I passed by Redfern Street. Sometimes I could see Aboriginal people busking around that street, Redfern Station and Redfern Park. One of those days I saw a guy with an Aboriginal flag on his T-shirt playing the violin in Redfern Street. The violin sound was harmonious and ‘accompanied’ me almost to the radio’s door. During the afternoon of the same day I saw that guy at Koori Radio; he was in the recording studio with other musicians and an Aboriginal actress. They were recoding a CD at the station. Some weeks later I saw them performing at an Aboriginal festival promoted by Koori Radio. This itinerary from busking on the street to visiting the radio station to get into the festival circuit is generated by ‘crossing routes’ which takes musicians from anonymity to small and mass venues. In this aim, Koori Radio is helping artists who are anonymous and giving them some visibility. In turn, this is showing the interests of these artists to participate in the market and suggesting that their creations are more than just cultural manifestations. Following Maryrose Casey’s argument (2013) I will show how the binary ‘traditional/contemporary’ nourishes other series of dualisms that they were breaking with; e.g. if the role of Aboriginal artists inside the cultural industry is under the assumption that they can be either ‘traditional’ or ‘contemporary’, hence they can only be ‘culturally motivated’ or ‘economically motivated’ but nothing else. However, many of the cultural productions at Koori Radio tell about their desires to achieve market recognition and to gain a similar economic return as other segments of the population enjoy and to show the heterogeneity of Aboriginal music.

Koori radio started to record the music of Black artists from its beginnings. Sarah explained to me how this happened. When she started to work at Koori Radio she had the idea to record live some artists who visited the station in order to have more ‘Black music’ available for broadcasting:

The thing about the live music why I had to bring it in is because there wasn’t a lot of recording music. There was a lot of Aboriginal music but you couldn’t find any recording music unless it was anthropological stuff. So the catalogue was very small. So what I used to do was to invite people in and we recorded, and we had music then. It was pre-recorded so I had something, so I could keep playing it. And, d’you know? some of the artists who used to coming and jam, they are now really well established hip-hop artists. And a lot of the artists who used to coming and jam, it’s knowing they got a place where they got,..., not been ashamed of say they are Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginals.

And visiting artists, who came through, who were going on festivals overseas, cos they were invited over, they came to Sydney and they were: ‘Where can we play?’ We just opened the doors of Gadigal and that was the venue! Sometimes we just had the musicians there and told people: ‘Come on down and sing songs in here’. That was about establishing a platform.

Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation is the name that Koori Radio received when it was incorporated in 1993 as a not-for-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation. It took the name of ‘Gadigal’ to honour the traditional Gadigal people of Sydney inner-city where Koori Radio is located. Although the radio station is popularly recognised as Koori Radio, the word Gadigal is utilised by the staff as its official name, when they answer the phone and to refer to the activities developed in there as Sarah points out. Significantly it is symbolising the traditional custodians of the land ‘opening its doors’ to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a platform for their artists and for Black and Indigenous artists arriving from overseas. Clinton Walker explains that until the 1990s Aboriginal recorded music was very slim. As Sarah argues, the major recording to that date came from the hands of anthropologists who attempted to record the song cycles that hold knowledge and tell of the activities of ancestral beings. So the recordings available at the time of Koori Radio beginnings were mainly these kinds of recordings. The didgeridoo became an icon of traditional Aboriginality from the 60s through what was termed ‘boomerang songs’ that surged as a genre which drew attraction from the growing Western interest in ‘ethnic’ music (see Walker 2014). During the 1980s Aboriginal music had started to grow, with women included in this growth in the 90s. Katelyn Barney proposes this growth is the result of the following factors: government attention to Indigenous rights that created a series of funding facilities, the growth of Indigenous radio stations and programs, the growth of Indigenous music festivals, the development of similar Indigenous music movements in other countries, the inclusion of Indigenous music in the market and national and international Indigenous achievements (see Barney 2006). It was in the 1980s when the first Aboriginal radio station in Australia —CAAMA— established a record label and recording studio, contributing to the commercialisation of Aboriginal music in the form of CDs, broadcasts, videos, films and television productions (see Ottosson 2006:116). Many of these CAAMA recordings are in the Koori Radio CD-

library. As CAAMA did, Koori Radio opened a studio-recording —Kameygal Studio— and funded the Gadigal Music label which helped to extend the kind of live-recordings of Koori Radio that were done from its beginning and those received by other ways. On the Koori Radio website this label is announced as having the aim of providing recording opportunities by promoting ‘iconic Aboriginal music, as well as new and developing artists’. As well, they run an annual competition supported by institutions by which five Aboriginal bands are granted the recording of an EP with the aim to facilitate more Aboriginal music visibility. These EPs are promoted during the radio shows, at concerts and events in the city which are broadcast and supported by Koori Radio and sent to other community radio stations.

Those who were grant recipients in 2014 formed part of the diverse genres of music and the selection criteria which fostered ‘new’ styles. For instance, one of the grantees was The Green Hand Band that, apart from its artistic potential was selected for being one of the first Aboriginal reggae bands from Sydney. These criteria are contrary to what Aboriginal artists frequently face when exposing their creations. As I showed in the previous chapter, Franca Tamisari analyses how Aboriginal creativity is defined from outside on notions and styles, expectations and definitions of the traditional, the urban, the naïf, ‘the pretty’, the ‘protestation’, the kitsch, the tourist, the secret, etc; all of which need to be absolutely authentic (Tamisari 2004:97). Tamisari provides an example in which an Aboriginal artist protested that his art was deemed not to be ‘Aboriginal enough’ and so was hoisted from an art competition. Similarly, as I mentioned before, one of my informants argues his music has been rejected by radio stations as it did not sound like Aboriginal hip-hop but instead U.S. hip-hop. In these cases, Tamisari argues, the Aboriginality is positioned before the artwork and the artist, the essence before the individual, and the category before the person. Somebody might argue that Koori Radio does the same: Aboriginality is the reason why an artist is promoted at the station. However, the significance is exactly the opposite: Aboriginality is built — but not defined— from inside as the sum of interpersonal subjective constructions, and the matter of how ‘authentic’ an artistic production is does not simply figure in the equation.

It is appropriate here to return to Taylor’s work to see how ‘Western’ artists are freer to make the music they want and how there is a lack of interest in authenticity by these musicians. While ‘Westernised’ people are considered artists who make art, and in art, anything goes, the culturalist character attributed to ‘non-Westernised’ artists demands authenticity and remains premodern or modern. Hence it is concluded that Westernised art moves further toward a postindustrial, late capitalist, postmodern culture, while the Rest remains premodern (Taylor 1997:143). The core of my position here is if somebody or an ethnic group is seen as pre-modern or modern, their art practice is therefore seen as ‘culturally motivated’ —to maintain their ‘traditional practices’ before forms of assimilation— or ‘economically motivated’ —to move forward to the post-modern world or survive in it. The analysis is not solely that Aboriginal people have not enough room inside cultural industries as I am showing. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson affirms ‘capitalism knows no boundaries and loves

‘Indigenous culture’ particularly when it can be detached from people making collective rights claims’ (Moreton-Robinson 2006: 219). Yet the work of Koori Radio has opened ways for Aboriginal artists not labelled inside ‘authenticity’ to achieve some recognition, which is doubly valued: as an heterogeneous expression of Aboriginality and as a way to achieve an economic return. In this analysis I am helped by what Maryrose Casey terms ‘the paradigm of tourism’. She analyses the binary that counterposes economic and cultural value, by which performative and musical Aboriginal expressions are categorized as culturally valued or as an agent for Indigenous people’s economic independence; i.e. economically valued. As Casey highlights, this binary presumes that cultural value ‘has been in some way compromised by the context of commercial production’ (Casey 2013:57). She believes that the key here is that, when Indigenous art is commodified, it is presumed to have been modified to a greater or lesser extent to suit the White audience, or the economies of tourism. We can see that again this paradigm is nourished by traditionalism and culturalism. Yet ‘Westernised’ subjects are not subjected to the labeling of hybridisation of their artistic objects, nor are their works subjected to a theoretical transformation for commodification. Yet this paradigm ignores the cross-cultural language which exists in probably any artistic expression by also ignoring Aboriginal people as professionals and denying that these kind of productions can have, as Casey affirms, ‘both economic and cultural value’ (Casey 2013:63). The industry gives emphasis to traditionalism to the detriment of diversities and—as in the words of Tamisari— ‘creativity’. Instead, Koori Radio’s role in recording artists’ music is based on an identity value of use which contests external forms to define Aboriginality yet it also offers a way to achieve economic value by the promotion of the heterogeneity.

## 2. ‘Puttin’ The Soul Back Into Sydney’



‘Putting the soul back into Sydney’ is a double meaning like putting soul music back into Sydney radio coz soul music is a Black community thing but means more like Sydney radio has been missing Black content on the airwaves so Koori radio puts the soul back into Sydney just by doing what it does. [Heather]

Yeah, the phrase I think was more about putting real stories, music and issues out from Indigenous and Black people. Making sure the true stories are told and not stories misrepresented! So in the long run it educates and enriches the community for the better, like ‘food for the soul of Sydney’! [Sarah]

‘Putting the soul back into Sydney’ are the words written on the Koori Radio van (pictured above) and a repeated phrase that Aboriginal Australians and other broadcasters use during their shows. When asking the station staff about the meaning of this sentence there was not a unitary response. Yet answers seemed to point in the same direction: the articulated meaning between *soul*, Blackness and Indigeneity, and the aim of Koori Radio to enhance Aboriginal presence in Sydney. The Koori Radio van is the motor which connects routes between different Aboriginal communities and areas in Sydney and conducts the *soul* around the city by creating — following de Certeau — symbolic transboundary routes. As mentioned, Bronwyn Carlson uses Michel de Certeau (1999) and Judith Butler’s inputs (2009) to explain about the multiple self in the construction of Aboriginal identity. De Certeau situates in everyday activities and behaviours ways to produce a network of anti-discipline ‘produced by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals (in Carlson 2016:173). Judith Butler’s work about performativity (2009) understands the everyday performance of identity as variant ‘selves’ and rejects notions of authenticity and fixed identities. Hence Carlson conceives an interpretation of the performance of Aboriginal identity as manifested by variant selves and related to Aboriginal acts and gestures in everyday use, such as wearing the colours of the Aboriginal flag as a statement (Carlson 2016:175-176). This approach will help me to show more strategies that Koori Radio employs to expose diverse ‘ways of being Aboriginal’ and subjectivities articulated in the Aboriginal political identity, symbolically highlighted by the exposition of corporeal-aesthetic symbols that attempt to dismantle the spatial order. The use of the Aboriginal flag in the spaces of the city and on their bodies symbolises aesthetic and corporeal forms of resistance. In turn, it will help to identify diverse strategies to ‘puttin’ and highlighting the Black-Indigenous art back into Sydney.

The music that is recorded at Koori Radio through the competition and other ways is sold at diverse events they organise. The most prominent are the Yabun Festival at Victoria Park and the Klub Koori events which take place at diverse venues in Sydney. As I explained in chapter six, Aboriginal people had been segregated in public spaces in the past, such as pubs or swimming pools and The Empress Hotel was the most frequented place by them in Redfern. Currently this regulation and split no longer exist. However when going out in Redfern and Waterloo there are still specific bars, shops and areas which are more frequented by Aboriginal people. One of the them is symbolically marked on its window by an Aboriginal flag and an official Australian flag; and inside you can see both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians customers. Yet Koori Radio staff have been negotiating venues outside

Redfern to promote Aboriginal visibility as part of the Klub Koori. Klub Koori was created with the idea of giving more visibility to the artists who jammed on live at the radio, yet also to establish partnership with venues and their owners. They have got to perform in minor venues such as pubs and while some young Aboriginal people complain about the fact that these venues were very expensive places to have fun, others were really happy to be listened to or viewed further away than Redfern. And the owners of these places—who were not Aboriginal people—were happy to let Koori Radio staff to hang from the ceiling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. Aesthetically the flags entail social recognition and bring its political analysis into focus. As Moreton-Robinson signals, these kinds of embodied daily practices—such as the public display of the Aboriginal flag and its colour on bodies and on places—embed ‘messages of resistance’ (Moreton-Robinson 2003a:12).

In my last months in Sydney Koori Radio re-organised an old activity on the roof of its building, named the Rooftop Concert Series. One that I attended was about Aboriginal reggae music and another about Aboriginal jazz music; presenting the first were also various African reggae musicians. This musical variety presented in both Klub Koori’s concerts and the Rooftop Concerts attracted a wide audience from diverse backgrounds, the dominant being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander but also White Australians, Pacific Islanders and Africans. During the two Yabun Festivals I assisted at 2014 and 2015 I met as well Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander people, Pacific Islanders, White Australians and international students who were volunteering. This festival has come to be a clear response to Australia Day which entails colonial symbols celebrating the arrival of the first British fleet to Australia on the 27th January 1788. In chapter six I explained the strong rejection from the side of the Aboriginal community around the Bicentenary celebrations. The anthropologist Andrew Lattas (1990; 1997) adopts a Bourdieu (1986) perspective in his explanation of the origin of this state ritual, understanding it as a production of symbolic capital, where the state seeks to profit from a culture of nationalism (Lattas 1997: 223). The Bicentennial celebration became, as he explains, an attempt by the state to create a symbolic production of corporate cultural identity for Australians by a massive investment of capital. This included a new Parliament House and a series of White Anglo-Celtic Australian symbols that represented a ‘domesticated space provided by mother country Britain’ (Lattas 1997: 226). This attempt to ascribe to the nation a personhood is produced to remedy the sense that ‘Australians are alienated or are lacking in a true self’ (1997: 234). So that, the national identity in Australia was dominantly designed with White-colonial European symbols but with a desire for its own identity.

The Australian Bicentennial events were full of nationalistic activities glorifying the achievements during the 200 years of colonisation, which were used, as Tony Birch explains (1997) to rewrite the past and ‘commodify’ Australia in terms of its distinctiveness. In this sense of distinctiveness Aboriginal people played a pivotal role in the symbolising of a White Australia that uses ‘traditional’ Aboriginal elements for the prominence of tourism, through symbols such as the didgeridoo or Ayers Rocks. Yet as mentioned, the Bicentenary was also marked by significant protests by Aboriginal

people who marched around Sydney claiming that ‘White Australia has a Black History’ (Healey 2008:111) including in their protests flags and colours symbolising the Aboriginal flag. So, 1988 marks the moment in which institutional events and counter-hegemonic protests came face to face with the remembering of different meanings of the arrival of Captain Cook. Nowadays the celebration of Australia Day on the 27th of January continues with a series of institutional activities around the city while the Yabun Festival constitutes one of the Aboriginal counter-hegemonic celebrations occurring in Victoria Park that gathers performances and speeches that go further in contesting the symbolism of this national ritual and bring to light Aboriginal creative productions.

Both past and current protests against or supporting the celebration of Australia Day are symbolically represented by the use of the Aboriginal and Australian flags. The Australian flag was raised for the first time in 1901, the moment in which the Commonwealth of Australia was formed, taking symbols from ‘mother Britain’ (Parbury 2000: 83). The Aboriginal flag was the result of the fusion of political resistance and art in the 1970s, designed by the Northern Territory Aboriginal artist Harold Thomas, taken to eastern Australia by the activist Gary Foley and utilised in the Tent Embassy in 1972 in Canberra. The Aboriginal flag rapidly ‘gained acceptance and became the most recognizable symbol of Indigenous Australia’ (Foley 2001: 16), a powerful symbol of Aboriginal identity and unity (Parbury 2000:130).

Before the Yabun Festival, a similar celebration was organised by the Aboriginal community in La Perouse, which was named the Survival Day Concert and celebrated the survival of Aboriginal people. In 2002, the Yabun Festival was created to continue this celebration which has been annually organised by Koori Radio. Yabun means “music with a beat” in an Aboriginal language, and the festival is mainly based on music although it gathers other activities and artistic expressions. Months before the Yabun, staff at Koori Radio worked organising it trying to get funding and artists to perform there. David and Kevin were the main organisers while I was at the station. I sat close to Kevin in the office zone, who asked me to help by telling him which new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music arrived in the radio. The role of Kevin was to find Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians for that day to perform. As well, he was in charge of arranging the participation of Aboriginal leaders, elders, writers and other important figures for the Yabun activities: concert, dances and talks in the Speak-out Tent. In the Speak-out tent there were panels about a big diversity of topics: policies about Indigenous people, past and present Aboriginal history, past and present relationships with police and health workers and about Aboriginal performers, writers, dancers and Aboriginal artists. Thus Kevin was calling Aboriginal people living in Redfern, La Perouse, Parramatta, Blacktown and other areas of Sydney and New South Wales to ask them to participate in the Yabun. So that, the Yabun gathered voices from different communities, giving room for them to expose their views and also their works.

On the days leading up to its celebration, walking around the city one can see different signs: those signs which advertise parties, concerts, regattas, fireworks and other kinds of entertainment for Australia Day; and those for the Yabun that are placed by Koori Radio staff and volunteers. These signs hang from lampposts and walls, yet they are not equally distributed around the city. Whereas those which announce the Yabun Festival predominate in Redfern, Waterloo and surrounding areas, the Australia Day ones prevail in the CBD and touristic zones— and are larger in size and visibility. The signs symbolise a division in the city which demarcates the areas in which inhabitants and tourists move that day. In parallel, these areas are marked also by either Aboriginal flags or the official flag of Australia that people wave or are symbolically represented in their clothing and painted on their bodies. Among the people at the Yabun, some were wearing clothes with the Aboriginal flag colours and a few of them carried an Australian flag with an Aboriginal flag replacing the British canton.

I will return here to de Certeau's work to analyse the aesthetic and corporeal symbols that I have been describing on the use of these flags and its colours. De Certeau (1999) describes how people 'use' a city by creating itineraries and this is symbolically marked by an aesthetic value. The author explains that subjects are not fully aware of their movements, but it is the aesthetic which marks the conscious side of their movements. Their acts are not merely physical movements; rather they are subjective acts which imply moments of sociability in which people see each other, 'control' each other. De Certeau's work can be used to analyse how the act of social recognition on that day is aesthetically marked by the use of flags or colours which symbolise either the Australia official flag or the Aboriginal flag in the spaces of the city. As de Certeau states, the conscious plane appears when somebody transgresses a norm. A neighbourhood or other areas of a big city are continuously dismantled and transformed by their 'users', who create itineraries between areas. I argue that the norm here is aesthetically marked in the area you move in and it can take a stronger discursive political meaning under social relations. To participate in one celebration or the other on that day it carries a political meaning which is greater than some of the participants are consciously aware of. In 2014, when the Yabun finished, I was walking wearing a volunteer Yabun T-shirt on the way to my home. Still very close to the area of the festival I saw a car with a big Australian flag coming. The car stopped at my side and a young guy got half of his body out of the car to scream to me: 'What's wrong with you?!' A few seconds later an Aboriginal woman with her daughter ran towards me. She accompanied me some meters towards my home asking my background and the reasons why I was a volunteer at the Yabun. The T-shirt I was wearing—with the red colour symbolising the Aboriginal flag with the Yabun and Koori Radio words printed— had been enough for both of them to 'identify' me inside one of the celebrations. Whereas inside Victoria Park that T-shirt meant support and volunteering, outside the park it had a transgressive character. In both cases, my body was carrying a political meaning yet it became especially transgressive outside the specific territorial boundaries of Victoria Park.



Apropos of symbols moving around the city, the Koori Radio van is very significant when broadcasting at events such as the Yabun and other activities that Koori Radio has organised or were organised by other Aboriginal organisations, such as during NAIDOC week, the Corroboree Festival and the Blacktown Artist Camp. I will shortly explain some of these celebrations, but I will first signal here —again following de Certeau —the symbolical role that this van has: dismantling the order of the city by being placed in these events. This van is used to broadcast but it draws the attention of many inhabitants, of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, due to its paintings. Especially Aboriginal people are used to rapidly identifying it by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and the Koori Radio symbol, and approach the van either to greet or even offer their creative productions to be promoted on the radio. All these are telling us about the multiple ways that Koori Radio uses to promote the varied Aboriginal artistic creations and as well, the aesthetic strategies it uses to highlight them, to attract people's attention to them and put Aboriginality further into those spaces of the city that are symbolically identified with it, such as The Block and other parts of Redfern. Thus, in these 'new spaces' non-Aboriginal people are able to see the multiple selves of Indigeneity embedded in multiple creative forms, not just those 'traditional' elements that have been selected to convey the distinctiveness of the Australian nation.



Performance at the Yabun Festival (photo by the author)



Victoria Park from outside during the Yabun Festival and sign with Aboriginal flag colours (photo by the author)



NAIDOC week celebration at Parramatta. Aboriginal flag colours all around (photo by the author)

### 3. Language and music as resistance

So far I have shown some strategies used to dismantle the spaces of the city by performing corporeal and aesthetic Aboriginal resistance and to promote the heterogeneity of Aboriginal music. I will delve now into an analysis of some of the music that is produced at Koori Radio and promoted in these spaces of the city. This will prove that, contrary to some affirmations of Sydney lacking cultural elements of Indigeneity, the elements that constitute their creations are utilised to build Aboriginality through a series of linguistic and musical expressions. I will support this analysis with the work of George Stavrias (2005) and Kimberly Christen (2006). Both works show the production and circulation of Aboriginal music ‘as a cultural object that repackages traditions and repositions Indigeneity’ (Christen 2006:416) and as a way to articulate both ‘traditional’ elements of Indigeneity—such as language (Stavrias 2005 :52)—with ‘contemporary’ musical styles.

In chapter eight I explained some linguistic forms of expressing Aboriginality in the radio broadcasts such as by the introduction of the name of the person’s mob. Another linguistic example is the very extensive use of the term ‘*deadly*’ which is continually reproduced in conversations in Sydney and also is found in the names of some shows at Koori Radio (for instance ‘Black, Young and Deadly’) and is often repeated during entertainment and community awards (see Fisher 2010: 275). As well, there are other linguistic codes used in daily relations and during the broadcasts such as : ‘cuz’, ‘brother’, ‘sister’ ‘aunty’ and ‘uncle’. Although Aboriginal English is frequently regarded as inferior (Keen 1988:11) these are linguistic elements to claim Aboriginality. Furthermore, as Jeanie Bell explains, Aboriginal languages have been almost eradicated in a large part of Australia—remaining more in the so-called ‘remote areas’—so that language is frequently used as the axis to determinate authenticity between Aboriginal people from remote and urban areas (Bell 2003; see also Eades, 1988:97). However as Diana Eades argues, social aspects of the way that Aboriginal English is used reflect and help to maintain and create a culture which is Aboriginal and which shows continuities with traditional Aboriginal cultures (Eades 1988:103).

Some of the bands that were promoted at the radio utilised these and other linguistic elements. For instance, the Sydney reggae band —The Green Hand Band— made reference to the ‘Dreaming’ (academic term coined to refer to Aboriginal religion) in their songs and introduced their performances by the name of the signer’s mob. As well, the Grandfather employed Jardwadjali language in some of the songs of his hip-hop band ‘Renegades of Munk’. The Grandfather is son to an Aboriginal mother and German father. His Aboriginal grandmother taught him some words in Jardwadjali when child. When he was traveling around Australia he learned other Aboriginal languages from the Alice Springs area and started to introduce them in his songs. Once back in Sydney he started to re-learn his language and then wrote a song in Jardwadjali. During concerts he introduces

the song as follows: *Next song is in my language, Jardwardjali*. These two instances show how Aboriginal artists take some contemporary elements of Blackness that have become transnational symbols such as reggae and hip-hop music to articulate them with cultural elements of Indigeneity through linguistic expressions. Here we see the local and the transnational together as —following Stavrias— a medium for identity articulation not just limited by its attachment to traditional cultural forms but also inspired by a transnational and powerful political attitude (Stavrias 2005:52).

Apropos the political character of these musical expressions, other bands employed a variety of political content in their songs that allowed other ways to perform Aboriginality. In June 2014, Koori Radio organised a series of concerts named ‘Hereby Make Protest’ to commemorate the ‘Day of Mourning’. The ‘Day of Mourning’ was the name given by other Aboriginal activists who went into protest in 1938 against the Australia Day celebration (Attwood 2003:54). Carriageworks, a multi-art centre close to Redfern also organised parallel activities for this homage. There were some performances in the entrance that represented past protests on the signaled day. Inside there were some art expositions that evoked these activists by the artists Karla Dickens, Nicole Foreshow and Jacob Nash. One of the pieces of the exposition, that belonged to Karla Dickens, a Wiradjuri artist born in Sydney, showed an imaginary body covered by a jacket on the top and a ‘traditional’ costume from the waist down. Thus, she was representing these activists with Westernised costumes while maintaining their Aboriginality. Kevin and Dave were organising the contribution of Koori Radio: some concerts of Aboriginal musicians and speeches of some Sydney Aboriginal activists. There were also some broadcasters recording the event. On the wall where the concerts took place there were some of the signs that Koori Radio staff had made. The biggest was the sentence already used in past protests stamped with the Aboriginal flag: ‘White Australia has a Black history’. In one of the speeches made by one of these activists he recited by memory the date and name of the multiple forms of protests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had made in the history, followed after each of them by the voice ‘protest!’. The music was varied and featured some of the artists that had recorded their music or were promoted at Koori Radio. Between them was Whitehouse, a funk, hip-hop band signed with the Gadigal Label. Its first single —PM Gonna Save Us (2011)— is a strong political song whose content tells about much of the concerns expressed in this thesis such as paternalistic governmental policies and other forms of governing such as military intervention.<sup>40</sup>

Intro (words)  
The Police killed Mulrundji Doomadgee  
And the system sets him free  
So until there is justice there is just us or is it just me?  
I don’t think so ...

Tip that grog down the drain

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<sup>40</sup> See the film ‘Utopia’ (Pilger 2013) and Karl Neuenfeldt (2008) for an understanding of military and police intervention into the Northern Territory that occurred in 2007 to ‘enforce immediate alcohol bans, health checks for all children under 16, expropriation of Indigenous lands without compensations’ under the guise of protecting children from sexual and drug abuse. These measures are seen by some commentators as a way to wrest control of lands for mining, pastoral and tourism interests (Neuenfeldt 2008:455).

But nothing in place to address this pain  
 Caused by years of government abuse and neglect  
 And what the heck they now coming to break our necks  
 And yeah something needs to be done  
 For the innocence of the children  
 But the answers not with a gun or military intervention  
 Or a government desperate for re-election  
 It's the sum of us big picture stuff  
 Education, drug and health, mental rehabilitation  
 Come on spread your wealth and not our stealth  
 And bring back the bones to the graves that you robbed  
 And while you at it why don't ya give my brother a job

The PM Gonna Save us  
 Send the cops and the military to behave us (bis)

Yeah you might think that I'm doing alright  
 But maybe that's just because I look white  
 And this helps me to survive your system  
 I came to raise a first in  
 No longer a victim of your racism  
 No longer a victim of your racism  
 No, No, No  
 Coz I'm a Koori with an attitude  
 Comin to pay some fuckin gratitude  
 For the poisoned blankets at the poisoned food  
 For taking the children away  
 When they had nothing to say  
 To stop your abuse  
 Order, order we are suffering post-traumatic stress disorder  
 And the thugs in blue in Redfern, palm Island and you know the truth  
 Are getting away with murder, murder, murder.

The PM Gonna Save us  
 Send the cops and the military to behave us (bis)

Our communities have been stranded for too damned long  
 And even though we issued report after report we still singing the same song  
 If ya wanna protect us then take the fuckin thugs out of uniform  
 If ya wanna save us then lock up the pedophiles both BLACK and WHITE yeah I'm just getting warm  
 And ya say that it's all our fault, that we got the problem  
 But until you fix racism ya never gonna solve em  
 RACISM maintaining segregation  
 RACISM keeping us welfare waitin  
 RACISM keeping the NT Intervention  
 RACISM keeping us uneducated  
 RACISM keeping us incarcerated  
 RACISM cops continually escaping the law  
 What the fuck is it here for  
 I said: WHAT THE FUCK IS IT HERE FOR

The PM Gonna Save us  
 Send the cops and the military to behave us (bis)

No, no PM gonna save us  
 Only we can save us yeah?!

This song was recorded as both a radio-edited version and another version containing swearing, having in its introduction the sound of a yidaki. Nonetheless, what I want to highlight here is the power of music that permits both the expression of political concerns but also that, as Daniel Fisher

explains, provides ways to indigenise artistic creations through a political voice (Fisher 2016:88; also Fisher 2011). The lyrics of this song make reference to different governmental policies through the figure of the PM (Prime Minister), the particularity of being an Aboriginal person and ‘looking White’ and the at times controversial relationship between police and Aboriginal people. These are ways to sing about specific concerns that have so marked the lives of Aboriginal people in Australia. In sum, they tell about the lives of Aboriginal people.

With all that I have exposed on this point I am not trying to affirm that the Aboriginal selves are simply a sum of ‘traditional’, ‘contemporary’ and political elements. Rather I have tried to show just some of the diverse and transculturated creative manners and forms used to articulate Aboriginality, to make it visible and to counteract traditionalist assumptions. As Kimberly Christen asserts, although some Aboriginal art has gained some legitimacy as ‘fine art’ (Myers 2002), the works exposed above are suggesting that cultural authenticity, territorial continuity and traditional knowledge ‘rests not in a pristine past or in an untouched tradition, but in the continuing practices of cultural change that are limited and enhanced by national politics, global markets, and local social maneuvering’ (Christen 2006:435). For the rest of this chapter I am going to delve into other theatrical forms to decolonise traditionalism assumptions and express Aboriginality through the work of Moogahlin Performing Arts whose concerns are similar to those exposed so far.

#### 4. From the National Black Theatre to Moogahlin Performing Arts

Be believed we can change the world. Look back now, we changed the world.  
[Gary Foley, historian, activist and member of the National Black Theatre, ‘The Redfern Story’]

I don’t see much political theatre today. Back in the days we said on theatre what we couldn’t say on conversations or speeches. And today, our children are crying but I don’t see much political theatre out there.  
[Bronwyn Penrith’s speech at the Redfern Story talk]

The above sentences relate to the film ‘The Redfern Story’ (Johnson 2014) about the National Black Theatre (NBT) and a talk I assisted at that was celebrated in Sydney about this film. The first one is by Gary Foley who I have introduced as an activist during the Black Power Movement in Sydney from the 1970s. The second corresponds to one of the NBT actresses who participated in the film talk. Gary Foley’s words suggest the importance that the NBT had as an artistic tool for the political struggles of that time. Bronwyn Penrith instead alludes to the need that theatre in Australia takes back this political character from the NBT. In this section I aim to show the connection between the political meaning of NBT that inspired the foundation of Moogahlin Performing Arts. In the same way that Koori Radio took over the role of Radio Redfern, Moogahlin is said to have taken the spirit of the NBT. This introduction will later allow me to show how significant is this political character to counteract and

decolonise dominant narratives and parameters of theatre in Australia and how much, as Maryrose Casey argues (2000) the NBT has been disregarded in the history of Australia theatre precisely due to its political character.

The NBT was born in 1972 in Regent Street in Redfern, moving later to the building where Koori Radio is today. It was only active from 1972 to 1977 but their work, significance and spirit remains and is remembered with pride by artistic and non-artistic Aboriginal people in Redfern. In 2007, Moogahlin Performing Arts emerged from that spirit and in memory of the NBT founding members. The significance of the NBT and its legacy is strongly related to its political character since it came directly as a result ‘of the Black Power movement’ in Redfern (see Johnson 2014). As the Black Power Movement involved a Black empowerment probably not seen in Australia before, the NBT was its artistic expression and put the voice of that political movement on stages which were dominated by the directives of ‘White middle-class men’. To some extent the work of both NBT and Moogahlin breaks with the idea of theatre dominated by White middle-class men, and presents decolonising dominant narratives and dominant representations.

The NBT was contemporary with another Aboriginal theatre company in Melbourne named Nindethana. Maryrose Casey analyses these two Aboriginal theatre companies and the echo that each of them has had in Australia. She argues that while the work of Nindethana was considered important for Australian theatre, the work of the NBT has not received such acceptance, being signaled more as a polemical exercise due to its political content than as theatre (Casey 2000: 24). The NBT started to perform in streets and pubs, away from conventional stages. In 1973, one of its productions, ‘Basically Black’, was turned into a show broadcast on ABC Television. Casey highlights that this show was probably the first time that non-Aboriginal Australians had seen Aboriginal theatre performers on stage, speaking about their own concerns (Casey 2000: 26). Karl, at Koori Radio, liked to show me ‘Basically Black’ clips. While playing one of them he directed my attention to its title ‘Superboong’:

D’you know the meaning? ‘Boong’ is a very bad word; but we used it to make it something good.

Á: What does it mean?

K: Black.

Á: Something like nigger?

K: Yeah, exactly. But in Australia.

Superboong is an Aboriginal hero whose aim is to fight racism wherever he finds it (Casey 2000: 27). The objective of these kinds of productions was to present the Aboriginal view about Australia in a satirical way and to educate through theatre —by communicating with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences (Casey 2000: 26)— in a clear attempt to create a path of communication between the mass audience and the Aboriginal people. So, in memory of the NBT, it aims to keep alive the Black political and artistic movement which has become an icon of Aboriginal fighting for rights,



through small protest plays. Just as the Black Panthers movement influenced the Aboriginal movement and Afro-descendent musicians from U.S. were largely promoted by, and have through Koori Radio, Black performance from the U.S. had influence on the NBT. One of its founders, Bob Maza went to the U.S. where he met the Black Panther Party members, getting inspiration and starting the NTB on his return to Australia (Johnson 2014). As part of both this political and artistic movement, Gary Foley considers that what they did was to adopt and adapt some of the strategies of the Black Panther Party to the Aboriginal Australian context (Johnson 2014). Thus, an Aboriginal Black Power in Australia emerged that, as mentioned several times, has had a relevant role in the inspiration of successive Aboriginal organisations and for the articulation of Blackness with a strong Aboriginal political identity.

In 2007, one of the members of the NBT, the late Kevin Smith, set up Moogahlin in the Redfern Community Centre. Moogahlin is a Bundjalung word meaning ‘to play or fool around’. Kevin Smith approached Gillian—an actress and also former manager of Koori Radio—to ask her to get involved in this new theatre project. Thus Gillian, with another two Aboriginal artists —Hellen and Archie—carried on the project. The constitution of Moogahlin states:

The association was founded in November 2007 by a group of Aboriginal performance artists, educators and community workers in honour of the late Kevin Smith’s request and in memory of the founder members of the Black Theatre [...] The principal proposal of the association is the promotion of performing arts, community arts and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [...]; to facilitate the creating, telling and sharing of community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories through performances by and between Aboriginal people for the benefit of our communities and to arrest social disintegration within the community [...]

Gillian read this statement when I interviewed her. When she was talking about the foundation of the association she exclaimed *it was about time!* to have another Aboriginal theatre company in Sydney. Just as Bronwyn Penrith claimed at the presentation of the NBT film that major Aboriginal political issues needed to be on stage, members of Moogahlin demanded a major presence of non-dominant narratives in Australian theatre. This would be possible with the presence of more theatre companies able to project diverse subjectivities and their voices into the productions. When I started this research in Sydney in 2013 there were only five Aboriginal theatre companies in the whole of Australia, of which one disappeared. Thus, Moogahlin’s work constitutes an attempt to put Aboriginal actors and voices into the scene as in its day the NBT did. Although Aboriginal performances and actors are around in Sydney theatre companies and venues, to run their own company provides the chance to direct from its beginning performances where to project diverse subjectivities and creative expressions.

At the introduction of the Australian fieldwork I signaled that the time I spent with Moogahlin Performing Arts was less than at Koori Radio. Their members were working in different projects



outside and inside Sydney during most of the time of this fieldwork. It was Heather who provided contact with Gillian who was outside Sydney. I talked by phone with her and she provided the contact of two other founders of the company who lived in Sydney at that time. I then met with Hellen a few times. It was advised then that during the times planned for the fieldwork in Sydney I would not be able to see many of their works: 'This year we're focused on getting funding. Last year we didn't get any, so we can't do much this year'. However, this situation provided data that reveals their difficulties to continue with their projects and the political spirit of the NBT, bringing back into focus the question about institutional funding and which are the parameters that define what is an Aboriginal theatre production.

## 5. A same tale and two different stories. De-Westernisation of performance

The story of a man who had an Aboriginal mother and a White father is quite common because of the rape. But then when we marry a White woman,... Oh, no! That's different. Black men shouldn't marry White women. And yeah, that was an interesting story and what're our breaking points as Indigenous people, d'you know? How much can people talk? Why there are so many Aboriginal people deaths in custody? But d'you know? None is being charged. Yeah, my sister died in custody; no cops got charged for that. We have interesting stories. We're sick of seeing the same male, White fella on stage. I have always said that Western culture puts arts up here in a high bracket, and our culture down here in the low for us.  
[Gillian, Mooghalin]

I wanna see Aboriginal people making drama that is not particularly about Aboriginal people; d'you know? It could be a spy-film, but not about Aboriginals; or anything like that.  
[Karl, Koori Radio and Mooghalin]

Gillian and Karl are expressing their desire to see a change in the sort of narratives that are dominant in the film and performance industries in Australia. The claims from Aboriginal actors in Sydney I talked with were similar to those in Madrid: their chances to perform in a film or theatre production came influenced by narratives that search for an 'authentic' representation of Aboriginal Australia and the 'dark-bodies' that accompany these narratives. Actors who lacked the physical characteristics to fit inside the 'Aboriginal traditional prototype', they argued, had reduced chances to get a role. So part of the work of Moogahlin is, as Gillian signals, to expand alternative narratives. To analyse this situation I will delve into one of the Moogahlin performances I attended that will permit seeing how they de-colonise and de-westernise narratives and body actors.

In November 2014 I went with Koori Radio staff to broadcast the Corroboree Festival in the touristic area of Sydney Harbour. The van stayed there for a week and different members of the radio were broadcasting live the activities that were developed there. The festival was organised involving various Aboriginal organisations. Between them, Mooghalin was the performance company and Koori Radio broadcasted and provided room for the artists who got the EP grant to perform. Corroboree is a word

commonly used for Aboriginal ‘secret and sacred ceremonies’, which consist of elaborate festivals with dance, performance and songs. Although initially corroborees were only one of the different types of Aboriginal performances, after British colonisation the word was used to group all kinds of Aboriginal performance. As well, it has been re-claimed by Aboriginal people (see Casey 2012 and 2013) and is used to refer to celebrations, such as the Corroboree Festival, which entail diverse Aboriginal artistic expressions. The Corroboree Festival consisted not only of music concerts and performances but there were also exhibitions, panels, art markets and film projections. The participation of both Moogahlin and Koori Radio was very active. Koori Radio interviewed Aboriginal artists, singers, writers and also Moogahlin performers who reproduced their characterisation of the performance on the air waves. Moogahlin’s performance consisted of a small play they performed most days during the week-long festival and later interaction, still within their roles, with the audience.

Gillian was the person who was directing this performance. As in other plays of the company, all of the actors were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, some of whom had participated in other plays. Following a NBT convention, they were wearing white and black masks to distinguish the roles of the play. The play offered two versions of the same tale which narrates the contact between Aboriginal people and the British in their initial colonisation of Australia. In the first version British and Aboriginal people seem to live together in a sort of harmony. In the second one, guns and shots appear in the same characterisation and the harmony between British and Aboriginal people is more conflictive. At the end of the play they invite the audience to share what they had heard with ‘family and loved ones’. And it ends by saying: ‘These people are just as much part of me and you as this country is truer than true’. This tale and the last sentence highlights their desire to include Aboriginal voices in rebuilding tales, stories and the history of Australia. Yet it also points to their desire to include Other stories and Aboriginal representations inside the dominant theatre frameworks, as a counterpoint. The question of to what extent voices or topics are represented inside the Westernised framework on stages is correlated with the scant space that Aboriginal people and Aboriginality get inside an industry which has been historically dominated by White, middle class men (see Gilbert 1998). The discussion here cannot merely be based on affirming that Aboriginal people also have embraced stereotyped representations since art is their primary way of living. As in Gillian’s words, Moogahlin is attempting to provide diverse stories and representations further than the dominants in the Westernised performances.

Somehow traditionalist tendencies have fixed the sort of narratives which circulate in the industry as well as the embodiment of those narratives. The repeated interest by film productions to register the “remains of traditional” culture have put emphasis on a specific subject or actor and stories that are based on the idea of remote traditional areas. The few productions that are based on urban areas such as Sydney tend to provide a more political representation of ‘urban’ Aboriginal people (see Peters-Little 2003). Among these productions based on ‘urban’ Aboriginal Australia, there is as well an emphasis on Stolen Generations stories. Of course, there are exceptions such as the film

‘Utopia’ (Johnson 2014) which makes a tour around Australia and the renowned TV-series ‘Redfern Now’ (Purcell et al. 2013) which is produced, performed and written by Aboriginal people. ‘Redfern Now’ is social realism based on Redfern and gathers a wide amalgam of characters of different social class and phenotypes, as well as narratives. When walking with some of my informants around Redfern or going to the Redfern Community Centre I could see some of the actors who perform in ‘Redfern Now’ participating in ‘community daily life’ like everyone else. Yet as said, the general tendency in Australian filming history has emphasised ‘Aboriginal prototypes’ based on traditionalism.

Maryrose Casey and Liza-Mare Syron signal that although in the recent times there has been a growth of Aboriginal directors in festivals and mainstream theatre seasons, there is still a dominant representation of the ‘Aboriginal prototypes’ in non-Aboriginal productions (Casey & Syron 2009:15). Thus, similar to Latin American and African actors in Madrid, Aboriginal actors see their chances to play a role reduced to the presence of an ‘Aboriginal character’. As well, if a ‘traditional Aboriginal’ person is understood to be dark-skinned, those who are non dark-skinned can have difficulty fitting that role. Under this logic, narratives that emphasise these characters require a ‘cultural body’ on scene that fits the cultural ‘economy of authenticity’ (see Casey 2012). Helen Gilbert argues that this circumstance is due to the fact that contemporary Aboriginal performing arts is consumed primarily by non-Aboriginal audiences. She states that the narratives of authenticity are based in colonial discourse that puts Aboriginal bodies ‘within a representational system which often fetishises visible signs of racial and sexual difference’ (Gilbert 1998:75). Gilbert uses Homi Bhabha’s theory of ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1990) to posit hybridised signs of Aboriginality to facilitate the ‘deconstruction of the colonialist stereotypes’ (Gilbert 1998:76). Homi Bhabha’s input denies the essentialism of a prior given original or original culture, arguing that original is never finished or complete in itself. Thus, he states that:

[...] all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom (Bhabha 1990: 211-212).

Although I agree with Gilbert and Bhabha’s ideas because they deny authenticities and provide clues to understand how in specific (third) spaces different selves are able to come to light, and how some spaces permit their expression, I am closer to the position of Fernando Ortiz which is ‘transculturation’. Ortiz insists on highlighting that *we all are* in continued processes of cultural transformation in multiple spaces and situations and signals that the dominant society transculturates as well as the subjugated one; to the extent that some of the national symbols of Western dominant countries today are the fruit of the transculturation that their cultures experienced with the colonised people. I have explained before about how the Australian nation helps itself to some Indigenous

elements considered ‘traditional’ for tourism and distinctiveness purposes. The hope would be that all the transculturated artistic forms could get room in the art industries, not just those more suitable to folklorising. Otherwise, as Ortiz signals, this not only limits their chances to work but also reduces them to an attributed inferiorised position (Ortiz 1981:586). As I have been arguing in this thesis — and as Gillian suggests— there also needs a switch in the narratives and an opening of more possibilities for other stories; in sum, to de-Westernise and de-colonise dominant narratives. As Ortiz sustains, there will not be a real national theatre until all the population get room and representations of themselves in the scene, as they are in the real life: in all their multiplicity of selves (Ortiz 1981:586).

## 6. What makes an Aboriginal play Aboriginal?

So far we have seen that cultural economies based on authenticities dominate in the industry realm and that works such as those of Moogahlin and Koori Radio permit the expression of multiple selves. However, it is also necessary to discuss encounters and engagements between both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists which will permit us to see how Aboriginal performances are defined in relation to institutionalised parameters. These sorts of encounters lead to the following question: What makes an Aboriginal play Aboriginal? To answer this question I will return to the forms of expressing Aboriginality already discussed in relation to Koori Radio music and the forms of bureaucratisation of art. The way that Moogahlin understands an Aboriginal play or performance is closely related to the way that Koori Radio understands Aboriginal music; i.e. what makes a performance Aboriginal is the fact that the Aboriginal participation is substantial. To the same extent that for Koori Radio didgeridoo music made by non-Aboriginal people was not considered Aboriginal music, the way that some non-Aboriginal theatre companies incorporate Aboriginality does not make the company or the performance Aboriginal. Gillian’s experiences while working in non-Indigenous organisations provides insights into this analysis:

It is very difficult to work in mainstream organisations as an Aboriginal. I worked in a mainstream performance company. I didn’t stay long because I felt I was taken as Blackfella. But they just wanted to pick on my brain; but never acknowledged me for what I was giving them, the culture knowledge that I passed into them. They never acknowledged that or valued that. I felt like I was just,... They had two strengths: visual arts and performing arts. And they got 150 thousand dollars for each funding to run their programs. And I was “the Indigenous performer”. So yeah, I didn’t stay there long. And I’m a type of person that has only recently learnt to say: ‘No. I’m not giving you my culture knowledge’ and then she gives me remuneration. Because that knowledge worths more than all your gainful or all your,..., d’you know? Western culture concepts. But together I’m only becoming really shabby about now; which is sad cos I could have done a lot of money. But yeah, it drains you and you got none to bound off because there’s not other,..., you’re not working with other Aboriginal peoples. A lot

of the non-Aboriginal companies get all these money to produce Blackfella shows and they become the gate keepers! We had this big discussion in the National Indigenous Forum. And we discussed and we came up with: 'If the show is not written, directed and produced by Aboriginal people there's not really an Aboriginal show!'

Different protocols have been developed in Australia for specific parts of the cultural sector, such as film and television, libraries and archives, museums and galleries, performing arts, visual arts, valuing art and respecting culture, music and writing. They have been realised in consultation with Aboriginal leaders and some inside the media industry like the SBS channel. These protocols show an effort on the part of the mainstream and Aboriginal society to create pathways to a mutual cultural understanding and working together. Apart from these protocols, as Liza Mare Syron argues, there is not guarantee that in its praxis there is always an 'empowerment for Indigenous artists involved' (Dwyer & Syron 2009:172). The '2013 National Indigenous Arts Infrastructure Program' (2013)—by the Australian Government—and the '2010 NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy' (2010)—by the NSW Government—offer supportive budgets for Aboriginal culture. In the first case, Aboriginal organisations can share those budgets with an 'affiliate partner', which is defined as a 'non-Indigenous organisation that delivers Indigenous arts and cultural initiatives through the provision of its programs or activities and meets the standards set by the Board'. Although the titles of both governmental strategies are highlighted by the words 'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal', there is room for 'non-Indigenous organisation that delivers Indigenous arts'. This bureaucratic language establishes engagements between communities. Meanwhile, actors in Sydney blame lack of funding for the disappearance of Aboriginal companies such as the one in Brisbane. From my first meetings with Moogahlin, I could see their efforts to get funding for new projects. Until almost the last months of my fieldwork, Moogahlin lacked a place to meet and in previous years they had met at Koori Radio. They got that space in the non-Aboriginal art centre Carriageworks, which accommodated most of the art, performance, music and expositions in non-Aboriginal areas in which I saw both Moogahlin and Koori Radio members involved. Thus, similar to Entrecalles, one of the problems for Moogahlin was to have a place to meet and organise their activities.

Chris Healy, in his work 'Forgetting Aborigines' (2008) analyses how much Aboriginal people have been 'forgotten' in Australian history and memory, due to their being seen as anachronisms belonging to the past, not the pasts of indigenous moderns in the present. The history of Aboriginal art in Australia is full of so-called 'Abo art', which Healy defines as 'art without Aborigines in the sense of it being produced by non-indigenous people, but also it is radically forgetful of both Aboriginal history and contemporary indigenous presence' (Healy 2008:83). Healy explains that this 'Abo art' has been employed by the Australian government from 1950s, adopting symbols from 'primitive' cultures to represent the new modern Australian nation. Government has employed designs by non-Aboriginal artists who created 'hybrid' works, thus leaving Aboriginal artists and custodians out of the loop and without financial compensation; i.e. there was a cultural appropriation. In recent times there have been

efforts from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people for including Aboriginal artists inside the market and in the funding parameters. However, situations such as those described by Gillian, similar to that described at Koori Radio about music, are opening dialogues about the ways that Aboriginality can be incorporated into the whole Australian artistic world. Margo Neale, in her work about the interpretation and labeling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, signals that it is important to be vigilant about the issues of marginalisation of art, the multiple faces that it can take and suggests that a way to erase the labelings would be by inviting non-Aboriginal artists to expose their works in Aboriginal spaces (Neale 2003:108). Whichever the strategies are, it seems that there is still work to do and issues to discuss for everyone accessing cultural venues on similar terms.

## 7. Performance and music Before and After Cook. Some final thoughts

Aboriginal culture is alive as well in Sydney. You don't need to go to Alice Springs and Northern Territory. The 'Welcome to Country', traditionally was done through song and dance and music maybe. These days when I do 'Welcome to Country' I read a speech, d'you know? There's not a right way or wrong way. Our culture survived because we've adapted it. And yeah, I live in the Eastern suburbs but my connections are still to Redfern.  
[Aunty Rose, end of the speech at the Corroboree Festival]

Gillian was in the audience listening to Aunty Rose, the respected woman of Redfern I have referred to before who was giving a talk about the history of Redfern in the Corroboree Festival. Gillian likes to name practices — in other contexts named traditional— 'Before Cook' (B.C.) and those cultural practices after the arrival of British in Australia, 'After Cook' (A.C.). This distinction acknowledges the British colonisation and the historical period in which forms of capital burst into Australia. The different faces that capitalism has shown during the history of colonisations and postcolonialism — from early market capitalism, to industrial capitalism to the most recent neoliberal capitalism— continue to be based on social divisions which favour the false superiority of White, middle-upper class, heterosexual men. As well, arguments to maintain superiority have been changing over time from biologist tendencies to culturalist ones, showing diverse forms of discrimination that recall old forms of racialisation and adopt diverse culturalist signifiers.

These signifiers are registered in the ways that culture is commodified. Jean and John Comaroff delve into the debate on the commodification of culture and suggest that this commodification permits a process of ethnic recognition through objects which circulate in the market. Further an intensive commercial exploitation of an ethnic identity that this can provoke, (re) creates identity, (re) encourages the cultural subjectivity and (re) charges the collective consciousness (Comaroff and Comaroff 2011:48-49). The authors point to the complexity of the transformation of ethnicities into commodities by which the classical divisions of the type of capital (symbolic and economic) of Bourdieu (1986) merge. 'Ethnic' commodities can be sold without losing their essence while their

cultural heritage constitutes identity distinctiveness for the nation and at the same time that identity is the one which confers the cultural character on the heritage (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011:57). This is in line with the argument at the beginning of this chapter, which alludes to the need to break the dualism ‘culturally/economically motivated’ to understand commodified forms of Aboriginal ethnicity with a double boomerang effect. In their analysis of how the commodification of ethnicity occurs, the authors explain that usually the process by which an ethnic group becomes a ‘juridical person’ involves claims of land and frequently starts by it (2011:129). In Australia, the negotiation for land rights with the State involves demands of authenticity which have been translated to political and cultural expressions of bonding to the land. Inside a neoliberalism context this also manifests the role of States to intervene in the creation of a brand, a label of Indigeneity; not only for their dialogue on land rights, but also by its capacity to attract richness. Tourism seems a good way to attract richness and the fact that Aboriginal people and their cultures have survived despite colonisation and processes of assimilation, gives the encounters with the Other an extra attractiveness. Yet as Tony Birch declares, this form of appropriation by government departments, statutory bodies or tourist promoters is superficial (Birch 2003: 149), and I will add, incomplete and reductionist.

Since Aboriginal people now position themselves in spheres of society from which they were segregated before, there is a bigger visibility of their works, yet their multiple selves are not equally valued. I argue that to some extent, to maintain an idea of authenticity has more meanings beyond its appeal to the market. Forms of ‘alternative authenticities’ are an inconvenience for its capacity to remember ‘open wounds’ in a society which has never had a real reconciliation process and because an ‘authentic, traditional culture’ is more suitable to mark differences between Australians and to be used as a panacea for the so called “Aboriginal problems” through workshops and similar activities. One of the main problems about the emphasis on authenticity is that it ignores the fact that cultural transits continuously occur, not only after the painful process of colonisation and postcolonisation. To really decolonise this paradigm it is necessary to acknowledge that —as I have shown in this thesis— cultural transits and identity re-articulations continuously occur, not just as the result of processes of assimilation by the dominant society but for instance also after ‘colonised’ people ally with other racially marked populations such as Black and Indigenous peoples from overseas. I hope to have shown that Redfern is a good instance that expresses the re-articulations of the Blackness and Indigeneity, not because Aboriginal people in Sydney are *less* Aboriginal than other parts of Australia; not because they *neglect* Aboriginality but because the multiculturalism of this city has permitted them to strengthen their struggles with similar struggles. The work of both past and present organisations of Redfern are enabling their visibility and strengthening their right to define themselves on their own terms.

## **Conclusion: Among Sydney and Madrid**

One of the salient empirical trends which emerges from the chapters of this thesis is that decolonisation of cultural spheres for Aboriginal Australians in Sydney and Latin Americans in Madrid involves struggles and dialogues with national politics and market economies. In spite of there some room being provided in art and media industries, dominant representations of Latin Americans and Aboriginal people that reproduce stereotypes provoke the production of inequalities and disadvantaged positions in the market. Findings in this thesis act as a reminder of the power of corporeal and sonorous representations in ways that stereotypes and prototypes are more easily disseminated by dominant groups.

I have detailed ethnographic case studies about the particularities of diverse institutional spaces inviting reflection on the role of the state as organiser of societies. This has invoked thinking about in which ways Latin Americans and Aboriginal people are included in national cultural politics, which are their chances to project their voices in institutionalised spaces, as well as thinking about governmental cultural policies. For instance, we have seen that authenticating discourses are dominant in Australian national spheres while also deterritorialisation are the dominants in Spanish ones. Thus, concerns about their equal inclusion are related to the need to amplify in these societies wider spectrum of artistic productions and mediated voices.

I have also explained the cultural politics through an analysis of the spaces in the city, the mobility of some groups and their abilities to 'dismantle' the social order by placing their productions in spaces that are free of the operational logics which limit their access in the market and institutional spaces. Indeed, these cases are situated in very different locations: a former colonial city with the largest Aboriginal population in Australia and a former colonial metropolis gifted with a high Latin American 'migration'; yet each case has presented commonalities of extraordinary significance for what counts as culturally valuable and for the decolonisation of cultural politics and the neoliberal market. Altogether they have provided further evidences for the forms of resistance.

The main commonality in these case studies is that resistance is produced with the same cultural elements that produce inequalities: media and artistic forms. Radio is an element that has given voice to one of the most invisible voices in Spain: Andean and other Latin American women who work in the domestic sector. Radio has historically been also a great element for Aboriginal people in Sydney to project their voices and cultural productions from the 1970s. Theatre has been from this time a decisive counter hegemonic element to put Aboriginal performances and voices in the focus of attention. Theatre is also a determinant element for Latin American actors to bring to the light their concerns and creations. The works of these groups have also shown the interchangeability between formal relationships with institutional bodies and informality through engagements with other collectives that undergird their works. This informality should be successfully celebrated for the



chances it offers to create alliances with more collectives but should also be interpreted as a sign of failure in the political economies and the capital market.

### *Re-articulations*

These chapters have described processes of articulation of identities based on changeable subjectivities, shared experiences and incorporation of new subjects, leading to the need to raise some final questions about the focus in ethnographic investigations. I have suggested numerous times that articulation is a body in movement that can develop through time, becoming a ‘sort of collective voice, but always in a constructed and contingent sense’ (Clifford 2013:60). The ethnographic cases in this thesis permit a demand for major research attention to be given to the transnational connections among counter-hegemonic and minority or marginalised groups instead of focusing solely on the relationships created between dominant and subordinated groups. If I had simply focused on these power relations in Australian and Spanish society I would have overlooked very interesting and determinant information for the development and sustenance of the projects of the groups studies through their engagement with other racialised groups as well as with members of the wider society—White Australians and Spanish. The latter indicates that there exist also segments in the wider society that are raising protest voices, supporting the struggles of Aboriginal and Latin American people. In the first case, alliances of Latin American and Aboriginal people with other subjects such as Africans, Maori, Fiji, etc. offer these peoples significant pathways to project their voices and work together. As Arturo Escobar signals, more and more groups like of those in this thesis can be seen as practising a kind of border thinking from which they engage in both their communities and other global movements so becoming part of the transnational movement (Escobar 2004:223). Yet as well I would like to highlight the need to view the subjects of study not as if they were ‘endogamic’ groups or isolated segments of the wider society, but active in their interaction with other collectives, capable of looking after their own concerns, attending to other people concerns, hence building common projects. In this regard, bell hooks is clear in criticising how contemporary scholars tend to neglect facts about ties, bonds and political solidarity between racialised groups (that she specifies with African and Natives in the Americas), who at best are presented solely as a corrective of the past, not as a continuum of affinity between themselves (hooks 1992:183). Findings in this research suggest looking at the efforts that these collectives put in to construct and maintain ongoing solidarity and how they join voices for the resistance and the transformation of the society.

The development of the works of the collectives in this thesis are showing also how identities are changeable and re-articulated through time and in the face of new internal and external circumstances. Contacts that to greater or lesser extent I have maintained with members of each groups suggest more re-articulations. Las Radiantes radio and Hermanas Mirabal have opened in their internal policies to include men in their works. When I was still with them some male and female voices were asking to allow access to men beyond just Friday evenings but no change was produced. Since 2015, the body

funder —the city council— is run by a new party (Podemos) that surged from the political activism in 2011-12 in Spain. This government has settled new guidelines, the main change being that they have asked Hermanas Mirabal to address gender issues in conjunction with men. This is suggesting ongoing interesting ways in which the feminist identity can be re-articulated. In the case of Koori Radio they have also opened their policies more to include participants from other countries. During my time with them, some Spanish people occasionally approached the radio to collaborate in some projects or volunteer. In parallel, some members of the radio station suggested that Spanish music should be played in the broadcasts alluding to the racialisation of Spanish as Olives. After I left Sydney, some of the Spanish who had approached continued their participation and one of them ran a program during the time slot previously reserved for Black and Indigenous peoples from overseas. As far as I know, this is the first time that a Spanish person has run a show in Koori Radio, which leads to thinking on new open pathways at Koori Radio.

On the part of Moogahlin Performing Arts and Entrecalles, they have continued with their projects, Entrecalles being lately more focused on video productions. As part of this, while I was still in Sydney Carlos asked me to record a short video for a production that showed diverse cities of the world. Since I did not have a camera nor skills in recording, I posted on internet an advert asking for volunteers, informing that it would be a non-rewarded collaboration with a Latin American theatre company in Madrid. Two Aboriginal participants in the research in Sydney answered the advert: Karl —member of Koori Radio and Moogahlin— who recorded it— and Greg —member of Koori Radio— who offered to lend a Koori Radio camera. We recorded the video a few days before I left Sydney and somehow, this transnational collaboration symbolically marked an end point to my work with the groups of this thesis (although I hope that it will continue in the future).

The development of these groups and this case suggest about new paths they could take in the future and the continuation of transnational solidarity, which reinforces the idea that articulations are body in movement that develops through time.

### *Indigeneity*

The analyses in this thesis have entailed discussing static definitions of Indigeneity, Aboriginality, Blackness, *mestizaje* and hybridisation by dismantling cultural binaries of traditionalism and modernisation. James Clifford (2013) thinks of Indigeneity as articulated, which permits recognition of the diversity of cultures and histories that make claims under that banner. He analyses societies in Alaska and Pacific Islands whose population are re-claiming their Indigeneity and defining it in their own terms. Clifford uses cases of Latin Americans in the diaspora and Aboriginal Australians to reinforce his thesis: Indigeneity shows different forms that articulate and re-articulate through time and should not be understood solely as attachment to a land without considering other ways to live outside the traditionalist parameters and the Indigenous imagined community. As well, Rosalva Aída

Hernández (2012) shows that, although some scholars consider migration processes as entailed of modernisation and integration into the dominant culture, Indigeneity can be revived in the diaspora inside the same country or overseas.

In the Sydney case studies, I have explained that the ways in which Aboriginal people claim identity embody subjectivity that contests racial, cultural and geographical markers that divide Aboriginal Australians. I have detailed their creative endeavours to present Aboriginality in multiple selves, which helps to break with static ideas of Indigeneity as attached to ‘traditional’ practices and to a specific territory. Comprehending Indigeneity also as multiple selves helps to understand why Aboriginal people from many parts of Australia claim Aboriginality from Sydney.

In the Madrid case studies, I have explained how Delia, Flor, Noemí and Carlos made reference to their Indigenous backgrounds at the same time as sharing a space with other Latin Americans. Yet significantly Indigeneity connected and disconnected with the shared spaces with other Latin Americans when claiming a special memory for Indigenous struggles, which suggests thinking Indigeneity in more expansive terms.

I will follow the approach of Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn (2009) to the word Indigeneity. De la Cadena and Starn break with the binary ‘Indigenous/Mestizo’ by arguing that Indigeneity can also include the non-Indigenous. They exemplify the conjunction Indigenous/non-Indigenous operating together through the figure of the Mestizo. They explain that the Zapatista movement has articulated a similar position with the Mestizo in an effort to connect Indigenous subaltern groups with non-Indigenous subaltern groups. This instance is useful to demonstrate how Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities articulate together for political and professional interests in Madrid. In *Las Radiantes* and in *Entrecalles*, the Indigenous and the Mestizo live together, connect and disconnect between themselves, creating alliances in response to the postcolonial and the migrant. In a transnational context alliances are created to coordinate projects together, permitting a performance of different nations and identities under the Latin American umbrella, which does not understand Indigeneity as separate from the *mestizaje* because one supports the other.

I propose that this conjunction can also include the Hispano. I will detail here the processes of identification that one of the members of *Entrecalles*, Marcelo, had during this research to explain it. When I first met him he referred to himself as Mexican —related to his country of birth and where he grew up— and Latin American —as a shared identity with other members of *Entrecalles* in Madrid. During the time I worked with the theatre company he internalised a new identification —Hispano— while discovering he could claim Spanish citizenship through his ancestry. He is grandson to a Spanish immigrant woman who lived in Mexico during the Franco dictatorship and married to a Mexican man. When Marcelo was in Madrid his aunty and cousin contacted him to tell they had been granted Spanish nationality after applying through the Spanish embassy in Mexico claiming descent through

the ‘Law of Historical Memory’. Marcelo followed the same bureaucratic path from Madrid but he was not granted. This was why he started to call himself ‘Hispano-Mexican’ as a symbol of vindication, while affirming that ‘his eyes were very Spanish.’ The process of acquiring Spanish nationality was very frustrating for him and costly since he opted for appealing to the Ministry of Justice in Spain to retry it. I asked him why instead he did not request citizenship through the ‘residence pathway’ since he qualified and it seemed easier to achieve:

Because I don’t want to! It wasn’t me who did the ‘Law of Historical Memory’. They did it. Why did they do it if then later they don’t apply it? My grandmother was welcomed in Mexico when she needed it. She was Spanish and refugee. And that law says I can be granted. It’s my right!

Marcelo used the same documents as his family in Mexico. They did not have a birth certificate of their grandmother since she left the country during the Civil War in Spain. Records of births at that time were only registered by the Catholic Church, not always well preserved. Instead, they used the registers in Mexico which listed the arrival of Spanish refugees, where it is noted that Marcelo’s grandmother was born in Madrid and had entered the country. Finally, after a long process of litigation, Marcelo was granted Spanish nationality through the ‘Law of Historical Memory’. This law has a genealogical character, aiming to provide nationality to the relatives of one and a half million Spanish settled abroad during the twentieth century. It has been euphemistically called ‘La ley de nietos’ —‘Law of grandchildren’— since it allows them to claim nationality when it can be proved their parents or grandparents were Spanish (Rubio et al. 2012). Before and after getting his nationality, Marcelo started to perform the Hispana identity to extend the parameters of the law and it was correlated with the ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’ play argument that claims ‘We’re here because you were there’.

As Arlene Dávila signals (2001), critical voices against the use of the term Hispano—in conjunction with Latino— have challenged its existence for its evocations of colonisation and for the homogeneisation of all the Latinos subgroups into a common category. Although this is in part rightfully correctly argued it is not the most valuable aspect here. As she argues, in specific Anglo-dominant contexts such as U.S., Hispana and Latina identities acts against ‘Anglo’ racism with regard to the Spanish language and “Hispanic” cultures. However, this does not correspond to how the Hispana identity is claimed by Marcelo since he uses it to claim his rights and ‘get back’ from the presence of Spanish in Latin America.

Parallel to this process of Hispana identification, Marcelo has never ceased to be a supporter of Indigenous Mexican struggles, being involved in transnational political engagements with Indigenous Mexican people in Spain, such as the Zapatistas. Nor has he ever ceased to call himself ‘Latin American’. Being a Mestizo of Mexican and Spanish descent, he has attached himself to Indigeneity and the Hispano in multiple manners, not as contradictory but as forming part of diverse political

struggles—including a national juridical recognition—that hooks in the Spanish terrain under the contingent sign of ‘Latin American’.

Altogether is showing that, just as classic conceptions of Indigeneity must be revised, those of *mestizaje* and Hispano as rendered and assimilated to the colonial should be too. The role of the Mestizo and Hispano should also be valued in the context of decolonisation before a dominant group—in this case Spanish—where they are not seen either as Indigenous nor as Spanish. And also it should be valued, as with Marcelo, their role in engaging with Indigenous struggles. Thus, the Mestizo is, in this view, as Charles Hale (2002) argues, not an assimilation to colonial legacy but a subversion of the divisive ethnoracial categories of Indio/Mestizo that, I add, in the diaspora connect between themselves under the contingent political sign of Latin American.

This case, as well as other cases exposed in this thesis show different manners to live and support Indigeneity by both Aboriginal and Latin American people. If Indigeneity ‘died’ on its way to *mestizaje*, why does a Colombian Mestiza actress such as Ari perform pre-Columbian tales in the schools of Madrid for Latin American children to ‘know their culture’? If acculturation and hybridisation have ‘erased’ Indigeneity in urban areas of Australia, why do Aboriginal people in Sydney claim their Aboriginality through a large series of cultural forms? In these case studies, Aboriginal people include mixed descendents in the Aboriginal political identity of Aboriginality and Latin Americans include the mixture of diverse identities (Mestizo, Indigenous, Hispano) in the Latin American political identity. The answer can be by admitting the influence of the ‘Occidental world’ and certainly not declaring the death of any culture in contact with others. Cultures and societies are in unfinished processes of transculturation reinventing, reviving and ‘recycling’ themselves. And these instances are supporting voices that claim a shift in rigid conceptions of Indigeneity, Aboriginality and the Mestizo, as well as suggesting including the Hispano and understanding it in its political context.

#### *Why not just hybrid identities?*

Considering the wide amalgam of nationalities/nations working together under the contingent signs of ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Latin American’—as well as their conjunction with other groups—one could be tempted to rapidly conclude and name their political identities as merging into ‘hybrid identities’. However I am going to provide some final reasons why I discard such adsorption in these case studies.

The concept of hybridisation is explained by Néstor García Canclini as the socio-cultural processes by which structures or discrete practices which existed in a separated form, combine to generate new structures, objects and practices. As well, he signals that such structures are the result of previous hybridisations so that they cannot be considered ‘pure sources’ (García Canclini 2004:8). Similarly, as mentioned in chapter nine, Homi Bhabha highlights that all forms of culture are continually in a

process of hybridity (Bhabha 1990). These explanations are very pertinent to discard authenticities and explain processes of cultural exchanges that emanate from intercultural engagements. However I believe we should not conclude that the complexity in which Latin American and Aboriginal identities are articulated in this thesis are ‘hybrid identities’. Furthermore, such assertions would not explain the correlation of subjective identities with a *decolonial thinking*. Aboriginal and Latin American identities are not identities that surge just from the fusion of peoples from diverse nations, social classes, genders, ages, but the result of the identities marked by these differences articulating together to defend themselves against external challenges arising from the colonial legacy. Precisely one of those challenges is the burden of hybridisation which has historically and colonially divided them and/or de-authenticated their bodies and voices in their struggles. Similar to García Canclini and Bhabha we might ask, are not surely the majority of us —if not all— the result of processes of transculturation? Is it not unfair to attach a hybrid identity only to those who experience the effects of an European colonisation? How effective is it for someone to claim a hybrid identity to contest that which is precisely splitting you from others?, i.e. the ‘hybrid’ category represented in the figure of ‘Mestizo’ and the ‘mixed Aboriginal’.

As Clare Land sustains, some scholars who argue against invoking the Indigenous/non-Indigenous binary often instead promote hybridity. The idea ‘hybrid identity’ was very strongly rejected by the Aboriginal people who participated in this research, who sustained that: ‘you can add all the milk you want to a cup of coffee, but it’s still coffee’. And the idea of ‘hybrid identity’ was never mentioned or even imagined by Latin Americans. The problems with hybridity, as Clare sustains, are that it is inseparable from political concerns (Land 2015: 97) and excludes the dominant society from such identification. As we have seen in this thesis, this is also a logic that is reproduced in the cultural industries by which Occidental art —which has transculturated as much as the non-Occidental— appears labelled as modern, vanguardist, etc., and non-Occidental art is dualistically separated between ‘authentic’ and ‘hybrid’.

Instead I have observed that both Aboriginal and Latin American identities are creating unity out of the diversity. In the two cases the genealogical element constitutes a benchmark before external elements of authentication, that evidences more than phenotypes, the attachment to the land or the continuity of cultural practices. It is not anecdotal that the Latin American identity surges in the diaspora. It responds to racial markers and postcolonial migrant positions inside Spanish society, getting to unify what in the Americas and Castilla was split. Thus, the Latin American identity in the cases of this thesis acts as aggregator that includes various opposites so that it breaks with them. It is not simply a fusion, but a coexistence of the diversity and distinct transnational subjectivities. Whereas, the Aboriginal identity in this case connects and annexes the remote and the urban, the ‘traditional’ and the ‘contemporary’, the different Aboriginal nations that cohabit in Sydney, living together as people having a same colonial experience as Indigenous of Australia.

*Decolonisation in the present as in the past*

Yo creo que está todavía por hacer la historia real; la historia del pueblo. Y la historia, para mí, no es una historia de héroes, sino un largo camino sembrado de cadáveres. Pero sin ningún tipo de ideología o de acritud, sino que la historia fue como fue y yo creo que ya es hora de que la vayamos conociendo. [Esteban Mira Caballos, historian, in “52 Minutos: Los últimos esclavos” (2016)]

I believe that the real history is still to be told; the history of people. And history, to me, is not a story of heroes, but a long road full of corpses. Yet [I’m saying this] without any ideology or acerbity, but history was as it was and it’s about time we start to know it [translated by the author. Esteban Mira Caballos in “52 Minutos: Los últimos esclavos” (2016)].

The above sentences respond to the video production “Los últimos esclavos” (2016) which brings to light the little known history of slavery of African sub-Saharan in Spain during more than four centuries until 1837. Mira Caballos’s words help me to introduce some last reflections. Decolonisation in this thesis has been presented through continued journeys to the past, making reference to old colonisations to explain the politics of identity and the surge of racial divisions. Yet as well, history and the past have been presented in the works of these groups for decolonising old narratives and hence contemporary narratives. Explicitly it is more evident in the plays of Moogahlin and Entrecalles, who ‘travel’ to the past to discuss contemporary representations of colonisation, challenging the audience to reflect about the past and hence about the present. My last argument is that theatre and radio offer unique opportunities for the groups of this thesis to re-write history or — following Mira Caballos— to write ‘the history of people’, with continuous journeys to the past and the present.

bell hooks asserts that decolonisation as a political process is always a struggle for definition in and beyond the act of resistance to domination, in which people are always in a process of both, remembering the past even as they create new ways to imagine and make the future (hooks 1992:4-5). In this, she signals the production of images and narratives as places wherein to break with the imperial gaze. More and more works by Aboriginal and Latin American peoples are pointing in this direction. Despite their inequalities in the market, in Australia the production of Aboriginal people in films, books and other creative forms has grown in the last decades exposing reflections about the past and the present (Huggins & Huggins 2010, Brennan & Flynn 2013, Thornton 2009, Perkins & Cole 2008). In Spain, during the time of this writing, there have been changes in the directions of Spanish films and other productions. Some new TV-series and films are including more actors of Latin American, African and Asian backgrounds. One of the most significant visual productions that marks a change in Spain is the film ‘Palmeras en la Nieve’, which is based on the lives of Spanish in Equatorial Guinea during colonial times. The film —as well as the book on which is based (Gabás 2012)— have received huge acceptance by the audience and have put Equatorial Guinea into focus as

probably never before. Although the film reproduces some stories of rape and abuse by Spanish to Guineans—in which there is a Spanish person in the scene apologising for it in Bubi (one native Guinean language)—both the film and the book have received critics. Literary Guinean voices critique that the reality was worse than the book shows and other Guinean voices criticise the scarce use of Guinean actors for the film. The film focuses its attention on love relationships and leaves Africans roles in secondary importance (with the exception of a Bubi woman who is in love with a Spanish man). Inevitably this film reminds me of the film of ‘Australia’ in which a love story is the thread of the film (although this love is not interethnic) and there is only a ‘light’ representation of the past colonisation.

Chatting with a friend who works in the film industry about ‘Palmeras en la Nieve’ she argued that I had to understand that films are made to be sold and love stories are what audiences demand. As well, she argued that the selection of actors, both for African and Spanish roles could respond to many reasons not just the nationalities. I then remembered something that Sari told me: ‘Europeans don’t distinguish between African people but we’re physically very different depending on our countries.’ I followed the presentation of this film in the media and I saw how Black actors were not present at the majority of the launch of the film with the exception of the main role of the Bubi woman.

At this point it is possible to wonder if it is better to have a film that for first time has put Equatorial Guinea into the focus of mass media remembering a forgotten past colonisation than nothing. As well, whether it is better to have films like ‘Australia’ which has achieved international release and shows Aboriginal removals of mixed descents, than nothing. I believe it is, yet what emerges here is that decolonisation is not simply to remember ‘the past’ or to work with Other actors. The point is that all voices are equally heard and that Aboriginal people, Latin Americans, Africans and others can enjoy from the same sources receiving support to project their voices, to ‘write the past and present history of people’. As the Nigerian writer Chamamanda Ngozi Adichie argues (2009) ‘power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definite story of that person.’ As Fernando Ortiz argued there will not be a real national culture until all the voices are represented, in their multiple forms. As we have seen in this thesis, there are multiple forms represented in minority media voices and cultural creations poking through, searching for alternative ways and spaces to expose their works.

This thesis has aimed to be one of those spaces for their visibility.



## **Conclusiones: Entre Sídney y Madrid**

Una de las conclusiones empíricas que emergen de los capítulos de esta tesis es que la decolonización de las esferas culturales para los aborígenes australianos en Sídney y latinoamericanos en Madrid supone luchas y diálogos con las políticas nacionales y las economías del mercado. A pesar de la dotación de cierto espacio en las industrias artísticas y mediáticas, las representaciones de latinoamericanos y aborígenes que reproducen estereotipos provocan la producción de desigualdades y posiciones desaventajadas en el mercado. Los resultados en esta tesis actúan como un recordatorio del poder de las representaciones corporales y sonoras debido a que los estereotipos y prototipos son más fácilmente diseminados por los grupos dominantes.

He detallado casos etnográficos de estudio sobre las particularidades de los espacios institucionales invitando a la reflexión en el rol del estado como organizador de las sociedades. Esto ha llevado a pensar sobre las maneras en las que latinoamericanos y aborígenes son incluidos en las políticas culturales nacionales, cuáles son sus oportunidades de proyectar sus voces en espacios institucionalizados, así como pensar sobre las políticas culturales gubernamentales. Hemos visto, por ejemplo, que los discursos de autenticación son los dominantes en las esferas nacionales australianas, mientras que los de desterritorialización son también los dominantes en las españolas. Así, cuestiones sobre su inclusión igualitaria están relacionadas con la necesidad de ampliar en estas dos sociedades un mayor espectro de producciones artísticas y voces mediáticas.

También he explicado las políticas culturales a través de un análisis de los espacios de la ciudad, la movilidad de algunos grupos y sus habilidades para ‘desmantelar’ el orden social situando sus producciones en los espacios que están libres de lógicas operacionales que limitan su acceso al mercado y los espacios institucionales. Sin duda, estos casos están situados en dos ciudades muy distintas: una antigua ciudad colonial que cuenta con el mayor número de población aborígen en Australia y una antigua metrópolis colonial dotada de una alta presencia migratoria latinoamericana; pero cada caso ha presentado comunales de extraordinaria significación por ver qué es lo que cuenta como culturalmente valorable y para la decolonización de las políticas culturales y el mercado neoliberal. Todo junto ha proporcionado mayores evidencias sobre las formas de resistencia.

La principal comunalidad en estos casos de estudio es que la resistencia es producida con los mismos elementos culturales que producen desigualdades: las formas mediáticas y artísticas. La radio es el elemento que ha dado voz a una de las voces más invisibles en España: mujeres andinas y otras latinoamericanas que trabajan en el sector doméstico. La radio también, históricamente, ha sido un gran elemento para que los aborígenes en Sídney puedan proyectar sus voces y producciones culturales desde 1970. Desde estos tiempos, el teatro ha sido un elemento contra-hegemónico para poner las performances y voces aborígenes en el centro de atención. El teatro también ha sido un elemento determinante para que actores latinoamericanos saquen a la luz sus preocupaciones y

producciones. Los trabajos de estos grupos también han mostrado la intercambialidad entre relaciones formales con órganos institucionales e informales a través de relaciones con otros colectivos que afianzan sus trabajos. Esta informalidad debería ser exitosamente celebrada por las oportunidades que ofrece para crear alianzas con más colectivos, pero también debería ser interpretada como un signo de fracaso en las economías políticas y el mercado capital.

### *Re-articulaciones*

Estos capítulos han descrito procesos de articulación de identidades basadas en subjetividades cambiables, experiencias compartidas y la incorporación de nuevos sujetos, dirigiendo la atención a la necesidad de plantear algunas cuestiones finales sobre el enfoque en investigaciones etnográficas. En numerosas ocasiones he sugerido que la articulación es un cuerpo en movimiento que puede desarrollarse a lo largo del tiempo, convirtiéndose en ‘una especie de voz colectiva, pero siempre en un sentido construido y contingente’(Clifford 2013:60). Los casos etnográficos en esta tesis permiten demandar mayor atención a las conexiones transnacionales entre grupos contra-hegemónicos y minoritarios o marginalizados en las investigaciones, en lugar de centrar el foco solamente en las relaciones creadas entre grupos dominantes y subordinados. Si simplemente me hubiera centrado en estas relaciones de poder en las sociedades australiana y española, hubiera pasado por alto información muy interesante y determinante sobre el desarrollo y sostenimiento de los proyectos en los grupos de estudio a través de sus acuerdos con otros grupos racializados así como con miembros de la sociedad mayoritaria — australianos blancos y españoles. El segundo caso indica la existencia de segmentos en la sociedad mayoritaria que también están alzando voces de protesta, apoyando las luchas de aborígenes y latinoamericanos. En el primer caso, las alianzas de latinoamericanos y aborígenes con otros sujetos tales como africanos, maoris, fiyis, etc. ofrecen a estas gentes caminos significativos para proyectar sus voces y trabajar conjuntamente. Como señala Arturo Escobar, más y más grupos como los de esta tesis pueden ser vistos como practicando un tipo de pensamiento transfronterizo desde el cual se involucran con sus comunidades y otros movimientos globales, formando parte así de movimientos transnacionales (Escobar 2004:223). Pero también me gustaría resaltar la necesidad de ver a los sujetos de estudio no como si fueran grupos ‘endogámicos’ o segmentos aislados de la sociedad, sino activos en su interacción con otros colectivos, capaces de mirar más allá de sus propias preocupaciones, prestando atención a las preocupaciones de otra gente y desde aquí construir proyectos comunes. En este sentido, bell hooks es clara en criticar cómo académicos contemporáneos tienden a desatender lazos, conexiones y solidaridad política entre grupos racializados (que ella ejemplifica con africanos y nativos en las Américas), quienes en el mejor de los casos son presentados solamente como una acción correctiva del pasado y no como una continuidad en la afinidad entre ellos (hooks 1992:183). Los resultados de esta investigación sugieren prestar atención a los esfuerzos que estos colectivos ponen en construir y mantener solidaridad en desarrollo y cómo unen voces para la resistencia y la transformación de la sociedad.

El desarrollo de los trabajos de los colectivos de esta tesis están mostrando también cómo las identidades son cambiables y re-articuladas a través del tiempo y la luz de nuevas circunstancias internas y externas. Los contactos que, en mayor o menor medida, he mantenido con algunos miembros de cada grupo, sugieren más re-articulaciones. La radio Las Radiantes y Hermanas Mirabal han ampliado sus políticas internas para incluir a hombres en sus trabajos. Cuando aún estaba con ellas, algunas voces masculinas y femeninas pedían ampliar el acceso a hombres más allá de los viernes por la tarde, sin que se produjera ningún cambio. Desde 2015, el órgano financiador —el ayuntamiento— es dirigido por un nuevo partido político (Podemos) que surgió del activismo político de 2011-12 en España. Este gobierno ha asentado nuevas directrices, siendo el principal cambio que han solicitado a Hermanas Mirabal dirigir temas de género en conjunción con hombres. Esto está sugiriendo interesantes caminos en curso en los cuales la identidad feminista puede ser re-articulada. También en el caso de Koori Radio se han ampliado sus políticas para incluir más participantes de otros países. Durante el tiempo que estuve con ellos, algunas personas españolas ocasionalmente se acercaban a la radio para colaborar en algunos proyectos o ser voluntarios. Paralelamente, algunos miembros de la radio sugerían que la música española debería ser incluida en los programas radiofónicos aludiendo a la racialización de españoles como ‘Olives’. Después de dejar Sídney, algunos de estos españoles que se habían acercado a la radio continuaron su participación y uno de ellos dirigió un programa durante el espacio que previamente estaba reservado para gente negra e indígena de otros países. Hasta donde sé, ésta es la primera vez que una persona española ha dirigido un programa en Koori Radio, lo que conduce a pensar en los nuevos caminos que se abren en Koori Radio.

Con respecto a Moogahlin Performing Arts y Entrecalles, estos grupos han continuado con sus proyectos, estando Entrecalles más centrados en las producciones visuales. Como parte de estas producciones, mientras todavía estaba en Sídney Carlos me pidió que grabara un vídeo de corta duración para una producción que mostraba distintas ciudades del mundo. Debido a que no tenía cámara ni habilidades en la grabación, publiqué en internet un anuncio solicitando voluntarios e informando que sería una colaboración no remunerada para una compañía latinoamericana de teatro en Madrid. Dos de las personas que han participado en la investigación en Sídney contestaron al anuncio: Karl —miembro de Koori Radio y Moogahlin— quien lo grabó— y Greg —miembro de Koori Radio— quien ofreció prestarme una cámara de Koori Radio. Grabamos el vídeo unos días antes de marcharme de Sídney y de alguna manera, esta colaboración transnacional simbólicamente puso punto final a mi trabajo con los grupos de esta tesis (aunque espero poder continuarlo en el futuro).

El desarrollo de estos grupos y este último caso están sugiriendo cuáles son los nuevos caminos que los grupos podrían tomar en el futuro y señalando la continuación de una solidaridad transnacional, lo que refuerza la idea de que las articulaciones son cuerpos en movimiento que se desarrollan a lo largo del tiempo.

*Indigeneidad*

Los análisis de esta tesis han supuesto discutir definiciones estáticas de indigeneidad, aboriginalidad, negritud, mestizaje e hibridización, desmantelando binarios culturales de tradicionalismo y modernización. James Clifford (2013) piensa en la indigeneidad de una manera articulada, lo que permite el reconocimiento de las distintas culturas e historias que hacen reclamos bajo este estandarte. Él analiza las sociedades de Alaska y las Islas del Pacífico cuya población está reclamando su indigeneidad y definiéndola en sus propios términos. Clifford usa casos de estudio de latinoamericanos en la diáspora y aborígenes australianos para reforzar su tesis: la indigeneidad se muestra de distintas maneras que se articulan y re-articulan a través del tiempo y no debería ser entendida solamente como apegada a un territorio sin considerar otras maneras de vivir fuera de los parámetros tradicionalistas y la imaginada comunidad indígena. De manera similar, Rosalva Aída Hernández (2012) muestra que, aunque algunos académicos consideran los procesos migratorios como vinculados a la modernización e integración en la cultura dominante, la indigeneidad puede ser revivida en la diáspora dentro y fuera de un país.

En los casos de estudio de Sídney, he explicado que las maneras en la que los aborígenes reclaman identidad incorpora subjetividad como contestación a marcadores raciales, culturales y geográficos que dividen a los aborígenes australianos. He detallado sus esfuerzos creativos para presentar la aboriginalidad con múltiples personalidades, lo que ayuda a romper con ideas estáticas de la indigeneidad adscrita a prácticas ‘tradicionales’ y a un territorio específico. Comprendiendo la indigeneidad también a través de múltiples personalidades ayuda a entender por qué la gente aborígen de distintas partes de Australia reclaman su aboriginalidad desde Sídney.

En los casos de estudio de Madrid, he explicado cómo Delia, Flor, Noemí y Carlos hacen referencia a sus ascendencias indígenas al mismo tiempo que comparten un espacio con otros latinoamericanos. Pero significativamente, la indigeneidad conecta y desconecta con los espacio compartidos con otros latinoamericanos cuando reclaman una especial mención a las luchas indígenas, lo que sugiere pensar la indigeneidad en más términos expansivos.

Voy a seguir el enfoque de Marisol de la Cadena y Orin Starn (2009) a la palabra indigeneidad. De la Cadena y Starn rompen con el binario ‘indígena/mestizo’ argumentando que la indigeneidad también puede incluir lo no indígena. Ejemplifican esta conjunción de indígena/no-indígena operando conjuntamente a través de la figura del mestizo. Explican que el movimiento zapatista ha articulado una posición similar con el mestizo en un esfuerzo de conectar los grupos subalternos indígenas con los grupos subalternos no-indígenas. Este ejemplo es útil para demostrar cómo las identidades indígenas y no-indígenas se articulan conjuntamente para los intereses políticos y profesionales en Madrid. Las Radiantes y Entrecalles, el indígena y el mestizo viven conjuntamente, conectando y

desconectando entre ellos, creando alianzas en respuesta a lo postcolonial y lo migrante. En un contexto transnacional, las alianzas son creadas para coordinar proyectos de manera conjunta, permitiendo una performance de las diferentes naciones e identidades bajo el paraguas de lo latinoamericano, que no entiende la indigeneidad separada de lo mestizo porque el uno mestizo apoya a la otra, indígena.

Propongo que esta conjunción puede incluir también lo hispano. Voy a detallar aquí el proceso de identificación que uno de los miembros de Entrecalles, Marcelo, ha tenido durante esta investigación para explicarlo. Cuando le conocí, él se refería a si mismo como mexicano —en relación a su país de nacimiento y donde él había crecido— y como latinoamericano — como una identidad compartida con otros miembros de Entrecalles en Madrid. Durante el tiempo que trabajé con la compañía de teatro él interiorizó una nueva identificación —hispano— mientras descubría que podía reclamar la ciudadanía española a través de un familiar. Él es nieto de una inmigrante española que vivió en México durante la dictadura de Franco y se casó con un hombre mexicano. Estando en Madrid, su tía y prima contactaron con él para decirle que habían conseguido la nacionalidad española después de solicitarla en la Embajada Española en México, reclamando esa ascendencia a través de la ‘Ley de la Memoria Histórica’. Marcelo siguió la misma vía burocrática desde Madrid pero no le fue concedida la nacionalidad. Desde aquí él empezó a llamarse a si mismo ‘hispano-mexicano’ como un símbolo de vindicación, mientras afirmaba que ‘sus ojos eran muy españoles’. El proceso de adquirir la nacionalidad española fue muy frustrante y costoso para él ya que optó por recurrir al Ministerio de Justicia en España para intentarlo. Le pregunté por qué mejor no intentaba solicitar la ciudadanía a través de la ‘vía de residencia’ ya que cumplía los requisitos y parecía más fácil de conseguir:

¡Porque no quiero! No fui yo el que hizo la ‘Ley de la Memoria Histórica’. Ellos la hicieron.  
¿Por qué la hicieron si luego no la aplican? Mi abuela fue recibida en México cuando lo necesitó. Ella era española y refugiada. Y esa ley dice que puedo conseguir la nacionalidad.  
¡Es mi derecho!

Marcelo utilizó los mismos documentos que su familia en México. No tenían el certificado de nacimiento de su abuela ya que ella dejó el país durante la Guerra Civil española. Los registros de nacimiento por entonces los hacía la iglesia católica, no siempre bien conservados. En su lugar, utilizaron los registros existentes en México sobre la llegada de refugiados españoles, donde se señala que la abuela de Marcelo había nacido en Madrid y entrado en el país. Finalmente, después de un largo proceso de litigación, le fue otorgada la nacionalidad española a Marcelo a través de la ‘Ley de la Memoria Histórica’. Esta ley tiene un carácter genealógico, con la intención de otorgar la nacionalidad a los familiares de los más de un millón y medio de españoles que se asentaron en el extranjero durante el siglo veinte. Ha sido eufemísticamente llamada ‘La ley de nietos’, ya que permite solicitar la nacionalidad a aquellos cuyos padres o abuelos son españoles (Rubio et al. 2012). Antes y después de conseguir la nacionalización, Marcelo comenzó a ‘performar’ la identidad hispana más allá de los

parámetros de la ley, estando correlacionado con el argumento de la obra de ‘El Polvo de mis Huesos’, que reclama ‘estamos aquí porque vosotros estuvisteis allí’.

Como señala Arlene Dávila (2001), voces críticas contra el uso del término hispano —en conjunción con el de latino— han retado su existencia por su evocación a la colonización y por la homogeneización de todos los ‘sub-grupos latinos’ dentro de una categoría común. Aunque este argumento es en parte acertado, no es el aspecto a resaltar aquí. Como ella argumenta, en específicos contextos anglo-dominantes tales como los Estados Unidos, las identidades hispana y latina actúan contra el racismo ‘anglo’ en relación al lenguaje español y las culturas “hispanas”. Sin embargo, esto no corresponde a cómo es reclamada la identidad hispana por Marcelo, ya que él la emplea para reclamar sus derechos y ‘recobrase’ de la presencia de los españoles en América Latina.

Simultáneo a este proceso de identificación hispana, Marcelo nunca ha cesado de apoyar las luchas indígenas de México, involucrándose en encuentros políticos transnacionales con indígenas mexicanos en España, tales como el movimiento zapatista. Tampoco ha cesado de llamarse a sí mismo ‘latinoamericano’. Como un mestizo de ascendencia mexicana y española, él se ha apegado a la indigeneidad y a lo hispano de múltiples maneras, no como algo contradictorio sino formando parte de distintas luchas políticas — incluyendo un reconocimiento jurídico nacional— que se enlazan en el terreno español bajo el signo contingente de ‘latinoamericano’.

Todo lo expuesto, conjuntamente está mostrando que así como concepciones clásicas de la indigeneidad deberían ser revisadas, aquellas sobre el mestizaje y lo hispano, como rendidas y asimiladas a lo colonial, también deberían serlo. El rol del mestizo y el hispano deberían también ser evaluado en el contexto de decolonización ante un grupo dominante — en este caso español— donde no son vistos ni como indígenas ni como españoles. Y también deberían ser evaluados, como en el caso de Marcelo, sus roles involucrándose con las luchas indígenas. Así, el mestizo es, desde esta perspectiva y como Charles Hale (2002) apunta, no una asimilación al legado colonial sino una subversión a las categorías etno-raciales divisorias del indio/mestizo que, añadido, en la diáspora conectan entre ellas bajo el signo contingente político de lo latinoamericano.

Este caso, así como otros casos expuestos en esta tesis muestran distintas maneras de vivir y apoyar la indigeneidad por parte de aborígenes y latinoamericanos. Si la indigeneidad ‘murió’ en su camino al mestizaje, ¿por qué una actriz mestiza como Ari interpreta cuentos pre-colombinos en los colegios de Madrid para que los niños latinoamericanos ‘conozcan su cultura’? Si la aculturación y la hibridización han erradicado la indigeneidad en zonas urbanas de Australia, ¿por qué la gente aborígen de Sídney reclama su aboriginalidad a través de una larga serie de formas culturales? En estos casos de estudio, la gente aborígen incluye dentro de la identidad política aborígen a descendientes mixtos, y los latinoamericanos incluyen la mezcla de identidades (mestizo, indígena, hispano) en la identidad política latinoamericana. La respuesta está en admitir la influencia del ‘mundo occidental’ y

ciertamente no declarar la muerte de ninguna cultura cuando entra en contacto con otras. Las culturas y las sociedades están en procesos inacabados de transculturación reinventándose, reviviéndose y ‘reciclandose’ a sí mismas. Y estos ejemplos están apoyando las voces que piden un cambio en las concepciones rígidas de la indigeneidad, la aboriginalidad y lo mestizo, así como sugiere incluir lo hispano, entendiéndolo en su contexto político.

*¿Por qué no simplemente identidades híbridas?*

Considerando la amplia amalgama de nacionalidades/naciones trabajando conjuntamente bajo los signos contingentes de ‘aborigen’ y ‘latinoamericano’ —así como su conjunción con otros grupos— una podría estar tentada a hacer una conclusión rápida y nombrar sus identidades políticas como emergentes en ‘identidades híbridas’. Sin embargo, voy a proporcionar algunas razones finales por las que descarto tal adscripción en estos casos de estudio.

El concepto de hibridización es explicado por Néstor García Canclini como procesos socio-culturales por los cuales estructuras o prácticas discretas que existían de forma separada, se combinan para generar nuevas estructuras, objetos y prácticas. Él señala también que tales estructuras son el resultado de previas hibridizaciones de tal manera que no pueden ser consideradas como ‘fuentes puras’ (García Canclini 2004:8). De manera similar, como mencioné en el capítulo nueve, Homi Bhabha resalta que todas las formas de cultura están continuamente en proceso de hibridización (Bhabha 1990). Estas explicaciones son muy pertinentes para descartar autenticidades y explicar los procesos de intercambio cultural que emanan de encuentros interculturales. Sin embargo, creo que no deberíamos concluir que la complejidad en la que son articuladas las identidades latinoamericanas y aborígenes en esta tesis son ‘identidades híbridas’. Además, tales afirmaciones no explicarían la correlación de las identidades subjetivas con un *pensamiento decolonial*. Las identidades aborígenes y latinoamericana no son identidades que surgen simplemente de la fusión de gentes de distintas naciones, clases sociales, géneros, edades, sino el resultado de la articulación de identidades marcadas por esas diferencias que en conjunto se defienden contra retos eternos que surgen del legado colonial. Precisamente uno de esos retos es la carga de la hibridización que históricamente y colonialmente les ha dividido y/o desautenticado sus cuerpos y voces en sus luchas. De manera similar a García Canclini y Bhabha deberíamos preguntarnos si la mayoría de nosotros — si no todos— somos el resultado de procesos de transculturación. ¿No es injusto atribuir una identidad híbrida sólo para aquellos que experimentan los efectos de una colonización europea? ¿Cuán efectivo es para alguien reclamar una identidad híbrida para contestar aquello que precisamente le separa de otros?, es decir, la categoría ‘híbrida’ representada en la figura del ‘mestizo’ y el ‘aborigen mezclado’.

Como sostiene Clare Land, algunos académicos que argumentan contra la invocación del binario indígena-no-indígena, a menudo, a cambio, promocionan la hibridización. La idea de ‘identidad

híbrida’ fue muy fuertemente rechazada por la gente aborígen que participó en esta investigación quienes sostenían que: ‘puedes añadir toda la leche que quieras a una taza de café, pero sigue siendo café’. Y la idea de ‘identidad híbrida’ nunca fue mencionada ni planteada por latinoamericanos. Los problemas con la hibridización, como sostiene Clare, son que es inseparable de las preocupaciones políticas (Land 2015:97) y excluye a la sociedad dominante de tal identificación. Como hemos visto en esta tesis, ésta es también una de las lógicas que se reproducen en las industrias culturales por las cuales el arte occidental — que ha transculturado tanto como el no-occidental— aparece etiquetado como moderno, vanguardista, etc., y el no-occidental como dualísticamente separado entre ‘auténtico’ e ‘híbrido’.

En cambio, he observado que tanto la identidad aborígen como la latinoamericana están creando unidad a partir de la diversidad. En los dos casos el elemento genealógico constituye un punto de referencia ante elementos externos de autenticación, evidenciando más que los fenotipos, la permanencia en una tierra o la continuidad de prácticas culturales. No es anecdótico que la identidad latinoamericana surja en la diáspora, responde a marcadores raciales y posiciones postcoloniales migrantes dentro de la sociedad española, consiguiendo unir lo que en las Américas y Castilla se dividió. Así, la identidad latinoamericana en estos casos de estudio actúa como agregador incluyente de varios opuestos, de tal manera que rompe con ellos. No es una simple fusión, sino una coexistencia de la diversidad y las distintas subjetividades transnacionales. Mientras que, la identidad aborígen en este caso conecta y anexa lo remoto y lo urbano, lo ‘tradicional’ y lo ‘contemporáneo’, las diferentes naciones aborígenes que cohabitan en Sídney, viviendo conjuntamente y teniendo la misma experiencia colonial como indígenas de Australia.

### *Decolonización en el presente como en el pasado*

Yo creo que está todavía por hacer la historia real; la historia del pueblo. Y la historia, para mí, no es una historia de héroes, sino un largo camino sembrado de cadáveres. Pero sin ningún tipo de ideología o de acritud, sino que la historia fue como fue y yo creo que ya es hora de que la vayamos conociendo. [Esteban Mira Caballos, historian, in “52 Minutos: Los últimos esclavos” (2016)]

Las frases de más arriba responden al documental “Los últimos esclavos” (2016) que saca a la luz la historia poco conocida de esclavitud africana sub-sahariana en España durante más de cuatro siglos hasta 1837. Las palabras de Mira Caballos me ayudan a introducir algunas últimas reflexiones. La decolonización en esta tesis ha sido presentada a través de continuados viajes al pasado, haciendo referencia a viejas colonizaciones para explicar las políticas de identidad y el surgimiento de divisiones raciales. Pero también, la historia y el pasado han estado presente en los trabajos de estos grupos para la decolonización de viejas narrativas y desde aquí, contemporáneas narrativas. Explícitamente, es más evidente en las obras de Moogahlin y Entrecalles, quienes ‘viajan’ al pasado para discutir representaciones contemporáneas de la colonización, retando a la audiencia a reflexionar



sobre el pasado y desde aquí, sobre el presente. Mi último argumento es que el teatro y la radio ofrecen oportunidades únicas a los grupos de esta tesis para re-escribir la historia o —siguiendo a Mira Caballos— escribir ‘la historia de la gente’, con continuos viajes al pasado y al presente.

bell hooks afirma que la decolonización como proceso político es siempre una lucha para la definición en y más allá del acto de resistencia a la dominación, en la cual la gente está siempre en proceso de recordar el pasado así como de crear nuevas maneras de imaginar y hacer el futuro (hooks 1992:4-5). Así, la autora señala que la producción de imágenes y narrativas son lugares desde donde romper con la mirada imperial. Más y más trabajos de aborígenes y latinoamericanos están apuntando en esta dirección. A pesar de las desigualdades en el mercado, en Australia la producción de gente aborígen en películas, libros y otras formas creativas ha ido aumentando en las últimas décadas, donde exponen sus reflexiones sobre el pasado y el presente (Huggins & Huggins 2010, Brennan & Flynn 2013, Thornton 2009, Perkins & Cole 2008). En España, durante el tiempo de escritura de la tesis, se han producido cambios en las direcciones de las películas españolas y otras producciones. Algunas series de televisión y películas están incluyendo más actores de ascendencia latinoamericana, africana y asiática. Una de las producciones visuales que marcan un cambio en España es la película ‘Palmeras en la Nieve’, que está basada en la vida de españoles en Guinea Ecuatorial durante los tiempos coloniales. La película —así como el libro en el que está basada (Gabás 2012)— han recibido una enorme aceptación por parte de la audiencia y ha puesto a Guinea Ecuatorial en el foco de atención como probablemente nunca antes. Aunque la película reproduce algunas historias de violación y abuso por parte de españoles a guineanos — en la cual una persona española en escena se disculpa por ello en bubi (una de las lenguas guineanas nativas)— tanto la película como el libro han recibido críticas. Voces literarias guineanas critican que la realidad fue peor de lo que el libro muestra y otras voces guineanas critican el escaso uso de actores guineanos en la película. La película centra su atención en una relación de amor y deja los roles africanos en una importancia secundaria (con la excepción de la mujer bubi que se enamora de un hombre español). Inevitablemente esta película me recuerda a la película de ‘Australia’ en la cual el hilo conductor es una historia de amor (aunque este amor no es inter-étnico) y existe una representación ‘light’ de la colonización pasada.

Charlando con una amiga que trabaja en la industria filmica sobre ‘Palmeras en la Nieve’ me decía que debo entender que las películas están hechas para ser vendidas y que las historias de amor son lo que la audiencia demanda. También, ella argumentaba que la selección de actores, tanto africanos como españoles podría responder a muchas razones no simplemente a las nacionalidades. Entonces recordé algo que Sari me dijo : ‘Los europeos no distinguen entre la gente africana pero somos muy distintos físicamente dependiendo de nuestros países’. Seguí la presentación de esta película en los medios de comunicación y vi que los actores negros no estaban presentes en la mayoría de las promociones mediáticas de la película con la excepción del rol principal de la mujer bubi.

En este punto es posible preguntarse si es mejor tener una película que por primera vez ha puesto Guinea Ecuatorial en el foco de atención del ‘mass media’ recordando así una colonización pasada que está olvidada, que nada. También, si es mejor tener películas como ‘Australia’ que han adquirido divulgación internacional y muestra el robo de aborígenes de ascendencia mixta, que nada. Creo que es mejor, pero lo que emerge aquí es que la decolonización no es simplemente recordar ‘el pasado’ o trabajar con Otros actores. El punto está en que todas las voces sean escuchadas de manera igualitaria y que la gente aborígen, latinoamericana, africana y otros grupos pueda disfrutar de los mismos recursos recibiendo apoyo para proyectar sus voces, ‘escribir la historia pasada y del presente del pueblo’. Como la escritora nigeriana Chamamanda Ngozi Adichie argumenta (2009) ‘el poder no es simplemente la habilidad de contar la historia de otra persona, sino hacerla la historia definitiva de esa persona’. Como Fernando Ortiz argumentó, no habrá una cultura nacional real hasta que todas las voces sean representadas, en sus múltiples formas. Como hemos visto en esta tesis, hay múltiples formas representadas en las voces y creaciones culturales de los medios minoritarios que están asomando, buscando formas alternativas y espacios para exponer sus trabajos.

Esta tesis ha pretendido ser uno de esos espacios para su visibilización.

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